UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH
OF DAVIS

LONG-RANGE PLANNING REPORT
OF THE DREAM TEAM

JUNE 9, 2015

Team Members
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INTRODUCTION
The Long Range Planning Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis (now known as the Dream Team) was created by the Board of Directors to develop a five year strategic plan for the church.

The formation of the Dream Team followed ten years of congregational achievements which incorporated most of the recommendations of the previous Long Range Planning Task Force. These included securing a Director of Religious Exploration, Kate Raymond, who has served in an exemplary fashion and who has been recognized by the UU Pacific Central District for her work. The church has in place a long term financial plan, as well as a planned-giving program and has established an endowment. Safety, habitability, and accessibility issues involving the Cottage are currently being addressed by the Building Committee. After a successful Capital Campaign, a new Social Hall was constructed in 2012 with upgraded bathrooms, expanded kitchen, increased storage and more meeting areas, as well as enhancements to the safety and accessibility of our buildings and grounds. Funds were raised from congregational donors, as well as a bank loan. These improvements were completed incorporating sustainable designs, and our church was awarded a Green Sanctuary certification in 2007. We hired a part-time Pastoral Care Minister to support our increasing pastoral care needs and our desired increase in programming. As well, we employed a part-time music director and raised salaries to fair compensation levels.

Shortly after the new Social Hall was finished, a “Gathered Here” workshop attended by 85 participants in March of 2012 determined that the following areas were vital for the vision of our own congregation and the denomination: Social Justice outreach including Green Sanctuary (received three times more votes than the next highest concern), Membership and Hospitality, Religious Exploration and Personal Growth, Community Outreach, Community Building and Social Events, Generosity and Stewardship, Music in our congregation and community, Pastoral Care, and Increasing Staff.

In this context, the Dream Team began its approximately eighteen-month process to learn from the congregation their “dreams” and discern a set of proposals that would set priorities for the church leadership for the next five years.

OUR PROCESS
The Board charge encouraged the use of affirmative inquiry in our work. Accordingly, we educated ourselves on its principles. We used these principles in our work to build on the church’s strengths and to explore the congregation’s aspirations inclusively and transparently.

Since Dream Team members had no experience with strategic planning, we felt the need for outside expertise. We investigated and interviewed consultants from the Unitarian Universalist Association and Alban Institute. Then we interviewed (at the recommendation of our senior minister and the Board president) consultants from the Bay Area Organizing Committee, an affiliate of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF/BAOC), a congregationally-based community organizing group. After several meetings with IAF/BAOC it was apparent that their initial process in working with congregations was very similar to what we felt our team needed to do in determining the aspirations of congregants. (See APPENDIX A—Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis – Strategic Planning Process Proposal by the Bay Area Organizing Committee (BAOC), an IAF affiliate.) The Board of Directors accepted our recommendation to contract with the BAOC in May, 2014. Our BAOC consultants outlined for our team an approximately year-long process. They attended most of our planning meetings and all 5 worship services, were available for phone consultations,
interviewed a number of congregational leaders, and led trainings that prepared a cadre of 43 small group conversation leaders.

The Dream Team sought and was awarded $4500 in training funds from the Congregation-Based Community Organizing Matching Grants Program of the Fund for Unitarian Universalist Social Responsibility to defray half of the cost of our contract with the Bay Area Organizing Committee.

Central to our process was intentional conversation in small groups of 8-10 congregants. Initially, Dream Team members met one-on-one and in small groups with Board members, Committee Leaders, and other key congregational leaders for their input and buy-in. Then the central questions for community conversations were formulated. The initial round of 22 small group conversations involving 104 congregants was conducted primarily in existing committees and social groups, answering the questions “Why did you come to the UU Church of Davis?” and “Describe a time when you felt most fully a part of /connected to/ or engaged in this community.” (For details see APPENDIX B—Dream Team Small Group Conversations Summary—First Round.)

An all-church dinner (the first in our new Social Hall) attended by 130 congregants initiated the second round of small group conversations. Fifteen small group conversations occurred that evening, followed by two more after Sunday services. Questions asked in this round were about congregants’ dreams for the future. “Imagine this community in 5-10 years; what do you want it to be? What part do you want to play in making it happen?” The Dream Team sifted through all the dreams, identifying common threads and grouping them loosely into six categories. (Results are in APPENDIX C—DREAM TEAM SECOND ROUND SMALL GROUP CONVERSATION SUMMARY.)

Subsequently, a set of draft proposals were circulated to the congregation by email and at church in mid-April, 2015. At the same time those individuals willing to help put the proposals into action were invited to a lunch meeting after Sunday services May 3. Many individuals that the Dream Team had previously identified as interested in a certain proposal were personally contacted to attend. Approximately thirty interested people attended and explained how they were willing to help. The Board of Directors was updated on our work and was anxious for the final report so that work could begin on the proposals.

Three of the proposals called for new task forces as they didn’t appear to fall into any existing committees or church groups. Dream Team members interviewed interested individuals and were able to identify task force leaders for the Social/Climate Justice Team, the Enhance Physical Spaces Team, and Pastoral Care Team.

A draft of our long-range plan was presented to the Board of Directors in June, 2015 and to our senior minister, Rev. Elizabeth Banks when she returned from sabbatical on June 1, 2015 and will be presented to the congregation by email and at a Sunday service.

Over the eleven months we were actively engaging the congregation in our work, the Dream Team presented five worship services. The August, 2014 service was an invitation into our process. In October, during our “roll-out service”, we modeled a small group conversation. We related what we learned during the first round of conversations for the January 2015 service. During the April service we shared some of the dreams we had heard in the second round of conversations and called for leaders to bring these dreams to fruition. For the June 2015 service we had a Congregational Celebration to ratify the strategic plan, and commission leaders responsible and launch the work.

Through story-based conversations, members of the congregation shared their experiences and interests with one another as they created a strategic plan based on their needs and vision. This
lives on in the final report as well as in the congregants who shaped it. Members built and strengthened bonds with one another, creating the foundation of ownership and relationships that have laid the groundwork for successfully implementing this plan.

WHAT WE LEARNED
As the Dream Team reviewed current data on membership and pledging, we noted trends similar to those observed by the previous long-range planning task force. Overall church membership has been relatively stable over the last fifteen years with a low of 257 members in 1999 and a high of 329 in 2009 with a current membership of 290 certified members. The total amount pledged has continued to increase—$195,038 in 1999-2000 to $317,629 in 2004-05 to $476,282 in 2014-15. This is noteworthy because the number of pledging units has been relatively constant, so this represents a sizeable increase in the average amount per pledge. As members asked for more congregational services and improved facilities, they increased their pledges to pay for them. (Pacific Central District Growth Grid—APPENDIX D.) We found it difficult to compare present and past numbers regarding attendance because there has not been a consistent method of determining attendance and recent records regarding Bridgehouse and youth attendance were not always complete.

Many of the dreams and interests of congregants in 2015 are consistent with those articulated in the “longer-term” recommendations from the 2004-2005 long-range planning task force, particularly the construction of a new Children and Youth Religious Exploration space. Also, as in the Gathered Here Workshop results, there continues to be a great deal of congregational interest in social/climate justice issues.

There is an overall desire within the congregation for more connectedness among members, particularly across generational and other lines, and overwhelmingly people felt that the small group conversations allowed them an opportunity to engage with others in the congregation in a meaningful way.

Throughout much of the congregation there is a desire to be more visible in the larger Davis, Woodland, and Yolo County communities. This means both becoming more visible as a worshipping congregation, as well as more engaged as an active part of the community particularly around issues of social concerns and justice.

Growth in cultural diversity was a strongly stated desire by the congregation, both in terms of our membership as well as partnering with culturally diverse organizations to further social/climate justice.

PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Through story-based conversations, members of the congregation shared their experiences and dreams with one another resulting in 215 aspirations for the congregation. The Dream Team collated these 215 aspirations into six broad categories: 1) social/environmental justice & interfaith work; 2) enhanced physical spaces; 3) outreach & growth; 4) spirituality, education & worship; 5) enhanced Religious Exploration for children; and 6) enhanced connections with each other. The entire congregation was invited to assess which of these proposals had continuing interest and whether there were individuals willing to work to bring them to fruition.

Following are the proposals and Dream Team recommendations for taking action. The first three call for the formation of new taskforces because they did not fit into work being done by existing committees in the church:
SOCIAL/CLIMATE JUSTICE AND INTERFAITH WORK—Of the original thirty members who expressed interest in this category, nine committed individuals attended a later strategy meeting on May 3, 2015. Subsequent discussions led to interviews and the selection of two co-leaders, who will identify and invite activists to develop and implement the recommended processes. Our committee concurs with their plans to:

- Form one or more teams to collaborate with United for Racial Justice and Green Sanctuary groups, other regional UU churches, local/regional faith groups and socially active secular groups within our region to address social and climate justice issues which may include homelessness, climate change, racial and economic inequality. (See APPENDIX E—Social Justice Report.)

ENHANCED PHYSICAL SPACES—There were many dreams about continuing the plans started more than ten years ago to “build out” the Children and Youth and Religious Exploration (CYRE) building that had been identified as a strong need in our Master Plan. There were many who felt that a new RE building would make our efforts to recruit a new Director of Religious Exploration more successful, and would also add many new spaces for group meetings on campus (a need recognized by the Adult Religious Exploration Committee). At least ten members were willing to work on this proposal. We propose that they:

- Form a team to consult with the Children and Youth Religious Exploration Committee, as well as the Adult Religious Exploration Committee, to determine what physical space needs are ideal for the Religious Exploration program to thrive, and then erect a Children and Youth RE building closer to the sanctuary/meeting hall as in the “Master Plan” from 2008. Exploring the financial feasibility of this proposal is essential; as is a congregational vote.

OUTREACH/GROWTH—This area of church life stimulated the most congregant dreams and five members were willing to put them into action. We propose that they:

- Are empowered to investigate and pursue improvements in our visibility in our community and the wider region; upgrading our web presence and networking tools and making our name more inclusive of all those who are attending or may consider attending. Additional ideas included innovative signage to make our presence better known to people in the community, and publicity strategies.

The other proposals augment or expand upon the work of existing church committees:

SPIRITUALITY/EDUCATION AND WORSHIP—Here there were many dreams and three individuals who were committed to action. We propose that these “activists”:

- Work with the senior minister and worship associates to increase the variety of worship and worship elements offered.
- Work with the Adult Religious Exploration Committee to teach about the Abrahamic faiths and about spirituality from a Unitarian Universalist perspective.

ENHANCED RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION FOR CHILDREN—The Dream Team appreciates the members who have agreed to join the Children and Youth Religious Exploration Committee and proposes that:

- The Children and Youth Religious Exploration Committee continue their efforts to further integrate our children and youth into the church community spiritually and spatially, as well as to empower youth leadership.
OUTREACH/GROWTH

- Explore outreach strategies with the Membership Council which include augmenting efforts at orienting and communicating with new members, strengthening efforts to retain members, and intensifying outreach to young adults and young families. Further ideas included new means of improving transportation to the church, bringing our message to those who live remotely or are home-bound, and developing a new member mentoring program.

ENHANCED CONNECTIONS WITH EACH OTHER

- Explore with the Membership Council ways of furthering our connections outside of Sunday services and resuming the neighborhood groups.
- Emphasize to the Pastoral Care Council the continued desire for pastoral care funding and organization.

Our BAOC consultant, Anna Eng recommends that our congregation, “while active and on the whole fairly engaged, might benefit from an ongoing discipline of conversation among members, and a practice of listening and relating broadly across different groups. People have lots of good ideas and want to get to know others, but it can be frustrating for them to figure out how to do that in a productive way. The small group conversations seem to have provided a way to engage meaningfully in a focused way and could serve the congregation as a mechanism for engagement in the long-term”.

In order to do that, our consultant recommends that there be a way for people to be trained in an ongoing way in how to conduct and organize such conversations. It's important for the conversations to be experience (or story) based, incorporate many voices, and that they lead to doing something. (For example, as the Religious Exploration building project moves forward the small group conversations could help when there is a need for congregational feedback or to answer questions. Also, they could help the Social/Climate Justice team settle on their focus issues or help the Religious Exploration committees select curriculum.) These are very different from focus groups or committees, and in order for them to be effective it will be important to train people in the difference.

This recommendation appears to many on our team to fall inside the scope of the Committee on Ministry, so we will work with them to see if they might be willing and able to implement it as an on-going practice.

Appendix G lists the names of those committed to these proposals.

SUMMARY

The Strategic Planning Task Force (AKA Dream Team) has widely engaged the congregation over the last six months and learned what congregants appreciate about the UUCD and what they hope for its future. Certainly, people felt that the small group conversations allowed them an opportunity to engage with others in the congregation in a meaningful way.

We found an overall desire within the congregation for more connectedness among members; more visibility in the larger Davis, Woodland, and Yolo County community; more new members and cultural diversity; and more variety in worship. In addition, a large number of participants feel
strongly about continuing the development of our campus facilities, with a new RE building being the preferred next addition.

**NEXT STEPS**

On June 8, 2015 the UUCD Board of Trustees approved this report and agreed that the Social/Climate Justice team (which has designated leaders) should begin its work. When leaders for the Outreach/Growth team are identified, that team could also begin work. The Enhanced Spaces (RE Building) team will await recruitment of ample leadership before initiating discussions with the Children & Youth and Adult Religious Exploration Committees about their space needs. The Board also concurred that the volunteers identified on the second page of APPENDIX F could be integrated into the appropriate existing committees to invigorate and bolster their efforts.

**APPENDIX A**

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis - Strategic Planning Process Proposal by the Bay Area Organizing Committee (BAOC), an IAF affiliate**

**Goal**

Develop a set of goals with the congregation, which are:

- Clearly articulated
- Widely shared and
- Broadly enacted by the congregation as a whole.

**Background**

The Bay Area Organizing Committee is a broad-based organization of community institutions—congregations, non-profit organizations, union locals, and civic associations—who are working together to create relational power that can build and strengthen each member institution as well as shape public policy for the common good. BAOC is currently organizing in Marin, Sonoma, Solano, Napa, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Yolo counties. BAOC is a local affiliate of the Industrial Areas Foundation, the nation’s oldest and largest broad-based organizing and leadership development network with over 60 local affiliates across the United States, as well as affiliates in Canada, United Kingdom, and Australia.

In 2013, UUCD initiated a relationship with BAOC after conducting independent research about broad-based organizing. Over the past year, BAOC organizers have been getting to know the congregation through meetings with leadership, a conversation with members, and attending services towards exploring a long-term relationship as members of BAOC. In February 2014, the UUCD Strategic Planning Committee contacted BAOC organizers with an invitation to attend a committee meeting and discuss the possibility of contracting with BAOC on a short-term basis to work with the congregation to develop a strategic plan. BAOC has experience working with many congregations around strategic planning processes, most often in the context of an ongoing membership relationship but sometimes in the context of an exploratory relationship. This proposal falls into the latter category and is for a one-year contract (with a possible extension to accommodate a longer process timeline) to work with UUCD to conduct a relational strategic planning process.
Proposal
BAOC proposes to work with the Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis for a 12-18 month Strategic Planning process beginning in June 2014.* Through a process engaging the congregational community in intentional conversation about their interests, energy, vision for the future, and appetite for action, together we will:

- Listen to the vision, ideas, and experiences of members of the congregation;
- Identify both common themes/priorities and potential leaders who want to take responsibility for making those priorities a reality alongside others; and
- Culminate the planning process by moving into shared congregational action.

We propose to do this in four broad phases, detailed later in this proposal:

**PHASE 1:** Planning and Communication
**PHASE 2:** Community Engagement
**PHASE 3:** Discernment and Plan Development
**PHASE 4:** Ratify, Celebrate, and Implement through Action

The center of this process is intentional conversation in small groups of 8-10 people. Through story-based conversations, members of the congregation will share their experiences and interests with one another as they create a strategic plan based on the needs and vision of the people of the congregation that not only lives on in the final report, but in the members who shaped it. Throughout the process, members will build and strengthen relationships with one another, creating the foundation of ownership and relationships that will lay the groundwork for successfully implementing the plan. A sample outline of a Community Conversation can be found later in the proposal.

BAOC’s staffing for this project includes Ms. Anna Eng, Lead Organizer of BAOC and Ms. Elizabeth Hall (“Liz”), BAOC Organizer. Ms. Eng has more than 12 years’ experience organizing with the IAF in Los Angeles, the San Francisco Bay Area and in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas working with a wide range of religious, civic and educational organizations. Ms. Hall has been organizing with BAOC for three years in Marin, Sonoma, and Contra Costa counties and most recently, in Davis with Congregation Bet Haverim. Prior to organizing with the IAF, Ms. Hall was the Executive Director of a non-profit organization called the UC Student Association, working with undergraduate and graduate students across the University of California system on campaigns to increase access to higher education. BAOC staff will be available to attend meetings with the Strategic Planning Team and/or other UUCD groups as needed at least twice a month, with phone and email consultation in-between. During periods of high activity, BAOC organizers will attend meetings, conversations, and events with more frequency.

We propose a 12-month agreement and fee to be negotiated with the Board of Directors and re-evaluated in June 2015 if the process will extend to 18 months or more.

*Note on the timeline: In our experience, one of the key success factors of a congregational strategic plan is the participation of clergy and key congregational leaders—particularly in the planning and discernment of a strategic plan. Therefore, we would recommend that during Phase 1 we establish a timeline that reflects this and accommodates Rev. Banks’ sabbatical schedule so that she is able to participate in a meaningful way in all Phases, particularly Phases 3 and 4.

**General Guidelines for Healthy Congregational Planning**

- Get strong support and buy-in from the clergy, committee chairs, and key leaders.
• Develop a plan for engaging the congregation and clear the calendar to allow for it.
• Listen to and engage members by building the plan from the bottom up (the pay off in ownership will more than cover the cost in time and effort.)
• Use an open and transparent process and exclude no one.
• Limit the number of priorities. Strategic planning requires you be selective.
• Keep the plan outline simple, and publish it in an attractive (and short) format.
• Celebrate the resulting plan by recognizing the people who are going to carry it forward.
• Work the implementation immediately and in different ways.
• Set an evaluation schedule and make course correction to the plan, as needed.

Strategic Planning...

...IS about what you should be doing and why you should be doing it,
NOT how it will get done. (Leave that work to the implementation teams that come out of this process or you will get caught up in the how and never move forward.)

...IS about what decisions you can make today, in the present, that will effect/change the future.
NOT planning for yesterday’s congregation or in reaction to yesterday’s problems.

...IS focused on the energy and interests of congregational members, leaders and emerging leaders. This is more important than the plan itself. If an idea has no leaders or energy behind it, it IS NOT a priority.

...IS based on conversations and discernment,
NOT surveys or data alone.

...IS focused on ‘what’s possible?’ and ‘who wants to take part in this?’,
NOT on ‘what’s wrong’ and ‘who can we put this on?’

Working Timeline and Key Steps

Phase 1: Planning and Communication (4-6 months)
• Strategic Planning Team (SPT) develops a proposal for creating a strategic plan
• SPT meets one-on-one and in small groups with Board members, Committee Leaders, and other key congregational leaders for their input and buy-in
• SPT finalizes a strategy, timeline, and responsibilities. This will include identifying the central questions for community conversations.
• SPT and key congregational leaders identify a team of UUCD members who can be trained in how to lead small group conversations
• Announce the Strategic Planning process to the congregation, ramping up to a launch of Community Engagement. This can be done during Sunday services, in the bulletin, via banners, the website, a congregation-wide letter, and other ways people learn about what is happening at UUCD.
• Have sign-ups/commitments for participation.

Phase 2: Community Engagement (4-8 months)
• SPT meets to clarify their own priorities. This is important, as everyone who is part of this team will have a stake in what comes out of the process. This does not mean everyone will get everything they want, but in our experience the more everyone knows and understands
one another’s interests and priorities up front, the less suspicion arises about hidden agendas.

- Hold Community Conversations engaging both active and non-active members across different committees, ages, family statuses, etc. This can be done in a variety of ways, to be determined during Phase 1, such as:
  - Holding one or more congregation-wide Community Conversations after Sunday services or during an evening;
  - Having the Board and active committees set a time to meet with their group to have a conversation;
  - Congregational members can host a small group conversation at their home for other members in their neighborhood, or for new members or less active members; and/or
  - Scheduling a conversation with Montessori school staff and parents.

- Reach out to members who have not yet signed up to invite them to engage in the process. *This can happen through phone calls, home visits, etc.*

- Throughout, SPT is listening for themes, challenges, and insights – and looking for members who may want to become small group leaders in this process.

### Phase 3: Discernment and Plan Development   (2-3 months)

- SPT (plus any active small group leaders, Board members, or others they invite to join in) meets to look at the results of conversations and develop a draft set of priorities, looking at what needs to be let go of, what needs to be strengthened, and what needs to be created.
- SPT circulates the draft plan to members, inviting them to sign up/commit to taking part in one of the draft priorities (commitment options can be short-term and long-term). *This circulation can be done via Sunday services, committee meetings, and/or a large congregation-wide event.*
- SPT (and anyone they want to reconvene) finalizes a set of priorities as well as teams of members responsible for each area.

### Phase 4: Ratify, Celebrate and Implement through Action   (1 month onward)

- Hold a Congregational Celebration to ratify the plan, commission leaders responsible and launch the work.
- SPT members take assignments to be the contact person for one of the action teams and report on progress or make course corrections on a regular basis.
- Identify times for leaders to report back to the congregation on their team’s progress (this could be a story during Sunday services, a separate gathering, and could be done all together or woven in one action team at a time).

#### Sample Small Group Conversation

- No more than 1 hour long
- No more than 8-10 people in each group
- Led by a trained leader or team of trained leaders
- Clear purpose: to engage congregants in developing and taking ownership for the congregational plan
- Clear agenda:
  1. Opening (15 min.)
     - Welcome and reflection
• Introductions (ex: name, how long you have been a member, and one word that describes why the congregation important to you or your family)
• Review of the purpose and format of the meeting

2. Conversation (30 min.)
• The question used is to be developed, but could be something like:
  “Think about you, your family, your community and this congregation. What has been your most meaningful experience here at UUCD? What is one thing that you would like to see happen here, that would be a priority at the congregation, that would make a difference to you, your family or your community that YOU would want to be part of making happen?”

3. Summary and Next Steps (10 min.)
• Review any themes, ideas that emerged.
• Explain the next step and invite them—future conversations, discernment period, Congregational Celebration
• Evaluate: how was this conversation?

4. Closing (5 min.)
• Thank everyone
• Closing reflection

Afterwards, small group leaders make some notes and evaluate how it went, how they did, if any follow up is needed and bring these back to the team.

Contact
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APPENDIX B

Dream Team Small Group Conversations Summary—First Round

These conversations occurred during November and December of 2014 and January 2015 in during regular committee meetings or meetings of social groups. There were 100+ respondents, some with more than one answer.

Question One—Why did you come to the UU Church of Davis?

Community—27
• Wanted a community with shared values
• Drawn to the people
• Came for community—had lost friends during the break-up of a very difficult relationship, wanted to reconnect
• Felt cared for here
• Moved from another city and found a welcoming community
• Had met UU’s in the wider community and wanted to get to know others like them
• Looking for community post-college
• Involved in a difficult legal process and realized her need for a community to vouch for her
• After a divorce, joined to make more friends
Personal values and beliefs consistent with UU principles—16

- “I was raised Catholic, but found myself looking for a religious community where people could live out the values and ideas they found worthwhile.”
- Wanted ritual/structure to help live values
- Freedom of belief and simplicity
- Ordained minister in another church, but did not hold with some conservative beliefs; wanted to be what he had always been
- “It felt right”—liked the relation between science and religion and philosophy
- “To find answers to questions”
- “To become more tolerant of Christianity”
- “Reasonable”
- Drawn to the Seven Principles
- Intellectual interest in religion

Kids’ Religious Exploration—16

- “I came to UUCD looking for a place to bring my 2 year old son, but quickly realized that I was staying for me.”
- Came for his daughter who loved RE and got him to return over and over
- Came for her kids and found 10 years in the Bridgehouse to be rewarding
- Looking for compassionate and empathetic place to raise my child
- Born UU, returned when wanted liberal religious Exploration for her children
- Children were learning from the neighbor kids about what it meant to be Baptist. She wanted to teach her kids about all religions.
- Raised Catholic, then dropped out; later with new family and small child wanted to try us out.

Brought by a friend—13

- Boyfriend brought her
- Married a UU
- Came with a friend(s)
- Friends in the church “recruited” her and her husband
- Congregants visited her dying housemate, so she decided to try the church out

Prior UU Connection—12

- Raised UU—6
- Prior UU connection—6—connected to another UU congregation, then moved to Davis and joined UUCD

Place for Spiritual Exploration—6

- “Shopping for spirituality”
- Needed spiritual stimulus, “spiritual fertilizer”
- Came to be spiritually challenged
- Spiritual intellectual communion
- Father was a devout atheist and mother was Christian. She kept coming back because of spirituality and expression
Social Justice Work—4
- Came because knew UU’s were social justice oriented
- Looking for a religious home that did things instead of “just praying about it”
- Joined UU’s at anti-war protests (Vietnam)

Personal Crisis—3
- At a time of grief, found a welcoming church
- Personal crisis—needed a Sunday morning activity
- Joined to rebuild a life

Music—2
- Place for singing

Other—7
- Started with the Buddhist meditation group, moved over to us after 2nd marriage
- Came because of a UU brochure she saw at the League of Women Voters
- Received a UU scholarship award as a UCD student
- Came for a class
- Employed as campus minister
- To develop deeper relational skills
- Appreciated incorporation of current events/reading materials
- Looking for something larger than self

Question Two—Describe a time when you felt most fully a part of /connected to/ or engaged in this community?

Pastoral Support—21
- He was injured and one of his co-greeters came to his home with ice packs and to see how he was
- Celebration of Life for her dad—all the support and outpouring from this community
- Most connected when Rev. Beth allowed him to help her get through her service upon learning about her impending divorce. He always feels connected here, and feels good when he can give and help
- Providing transportation as part of the caring committee in the 1990’s
- Invited by Beth to create a memorial service after death of mom
- At 9/11/2001 memorial service—we were all involved in shared grief
- Minister made a very deep personal connection
- Personal and family support after her diagnosis of breast cancer
- Personal support (cards and letters) for her earth justice work in the community
- “I’m a lone wolf—not into deep sharing, but felt most connected when a family member was dying. I wrote about it on a ‘chalice’ slip. Rev. Beth responded in a loving a and warm way and I continue to write to Beth via the slips in the back of the sanctuary because it is a way to stay private
- Candle lighting about people’s needs makes me feel that I will be cared for when I have need
Social Groups—17

- For many years we made a Thanksgiving dinner at church for all who were interested. Lots of fun, made us feel like a family
- Whole congregation celebrated her 50th birthday with her
- Church group summer vacations at Dillon Beach in the old days
- I’m most connected when meeting with the Women’s Fellowship group
- “I am not a member and do not attend church. The Men’s Group provides an important outlet and contact with others that I otherwise would miss.”
- Found a lively young adult group
- Making connections with people at the Welcome Table

Sunday Services—15

- “I feel most engaged when a particular sermon, or music selection, feels relevant and stimulates me to consider the issue, and my greater emotional involvement, in depth. Sunday service is a kind of structured meditation for me! A helpful break in (usually) a busy week.”
- Provides an emotional experience of the spiritual
- Was personally touched by the service on adoption that coincided with being contacted by the daughter she had given up for adoption
- When part of a service that carried me away (music and poetry)
- Giving a sermon on dreams that was well received
- “When word meanings are mentioned and when sermons share personal”
- Holding hands or connecting with touch during a service
- During collective silence during worship
- During the service when people speak their mind
- During the sermon when the message resonates
- Being invited to push a child in the wheelbarrow during the service made me feel known and a part of the community

Working Together for the Good of the Church—15

- When got to know people well through working on the auction
- When felt ownership as part of a group caring for the grounds
- Being included in a closely-knit team filling a need
- Group problem solving and achieving a goal
- Connecting with more congregants via committee work
- As Board President
- When invited to leadership

Social Justice Project—11

- Participating in social justice events, such as MLK Day, Transgender Day of Remembrance, pepper spray incident, going to Tent City at Justice GA in Phoenix
- Participating in trip to New Orleans after Katrina—this was social justice in action
- Green Sanctuary effort, working with a group
- “UU’s in Woodland keep popping up at social action groups, a natural alliance”
- Volunteering at Interfaith Rotating Winter Shelter—the church gives opportunities for serving others together making us feel connected to each other by service. The shelter
experience brought/brings joy, new experiences and helps us experience church community in a new way.

- United for Racial Justice activities keep her here
- The November 2007 trip to Maclovio Rojas—the huge range of ages, and the group coming into their own identity in another culture. Seeing teens describe themselves as UU. Living our values. Finding my limits.
- During public witness for gay marriage

Music—9

- Singing in choir, especially when congregation is singing, too
- Singing “We Shall Overcome” at a special night service
- Laurence Cole singing weekend—
- Part of something larger
- Connection through music within the choir and within the church community and reaching to outer community: nursing home, park and public places; music brings up feelings, memories, history; brings us some transcendent moments

Being a Worship Associate—8

- Being a worship associate makes me feel most a part of a spiritual community which has purpose of fostering the spiritual path of each person through active participation
- Feeling of being engaged in ministry when you research a service topic and really contribute to the service
- Feeling of bonding between the minister and worship associate when each has truly given of him/herself
- Group effort on a worship associates’ book
- Working with others is a spiritual way brings a richness

Planning & Building a Structure—8

- Planning and building the library /office
- Being part of a group building something
- Working together with others on a common goal—Building Task Force for social hall
- Previous auction (2012) energized entire congregation toward a single goal—bridge to the Bridge House

Teaching Kids’ Religious Exploration—6

- Connecting to many human beings through teaching RE
- Most engaged when doing the music program with youth
- As a Coming of Age Mentor

Trust/trust through vulnerability—8

- Congregation works well as a group. I trust them.
- When congregation was divided on being a sanctuary for draft resisters, the group that lost stood up and stated that they would stay in church. Congregation accepts and holds people with very different views
- Went out on a limb (starting Green Sanctuary effort) but congregation supported her efforts
- During time as a Board President felt “held.”
- Congregants came through when I went out on a limb organizing our IRWS involvement. Deep personal connections grow from joint ventures at church
Other—3
- Came here to work
- When describing our church and UU values to friends
- Here in spirit (body is slowing down)

APPENDIX C

DREAM TEAM SECOND ROUND SMALL GROUP CONVERSATION SUMMARY
February and March, 2015

Imagine this community in 5-10 years; what do you want it to be?

What part do you want to play in making it happen?

Participant’s answers were recorded by the group leader. (Some had more than one “dream.”) Dream Team members summarized and grouped the responses.

OUTREACH/GROWTH – 69
- Grow – 13
  - Transportation – 4
  - Attract and retain members – 4
  - Attract more young families – 2
  - More young members
  - Stream service
- Identification and branding – 24
  - Name change – 9
  - More visible – 8
  - Advertise – 3
  - Revamp website – 3
  - Network – 1
- Orientation/communication – 11
- More cultural diversity – 14
- Satellite location – 5
- Partner church – 2
- Faith work on campus
- Other – 1

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND INTERFAITH WORK – 33
- Farming on the church grounds – 5
- Food pantry garden(ers), food garden program, orchards – 3
- Work with other local groups on social issues (inclusive of region as a whole) – 11
- Homeless issues – 4
- Partner with other Davis churches on specific areas (e.g. serving needy) – 2
- Global warming/our ecological footprint – 2
- Other – 2
ENHANCE RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION FOR CHILDREN – 37
- Grow/expand RE – 20
  - Continue master plan for RE building for our children – 10
- Integrate kids with church community – 6
- Curriculum – 4
- Youth leadership – 2
- Other – 4

ENHANCE OUR CONNECTIONS WITH EACH OTHER – 37
- More ways to connect outside of Sunday services – 19
- Continue pastoral care funding and organization – 8
- Hire “social director” to coordinate volunteers/event – 3
- More support for Campus Ministry – 2
- Keep neighborhood groups going – 2
- Other – 3

ENHANCE PHYSICAL SPACES – 21
- Memorial grove improvements – 7
- Continue to create habitat – 3
- Increased awareness of space (weddings) – 2
- Other – 9
- Note: RE physical space needs incorporated into “Enhance Religious Exploration for Children”

SPIRITUALITY/EDUCATION AND WORSHIP – 39
- Expand Abraham faith programs – 7
- Develop in-depth spiritual education according to UU history and theology – 2
- More worship diversity/variation – 11
- Children participating in worship – 2
- Music – 5
- Other – 12

APPENDIX D

Membership Data 1999-2015
257 277 287 290 305 279 306 326 329 323 306 316 272 276 300 293 290
APPENDIX E


I have now had separate one-hour meetings with both Robin Datel and Stefan Harvey, each of whom has agreed to serve as co-chair to a new Social Justice initiative. Each has had extensive experience in social action activities both in our area (Robin) and on a national level with the federal government (Stefan), and each brought a lot of enthusiasm to our one on one meetings. Robin and Stefan’s combined experience in social action activities includes local, state and federal work in both service and policy advocacy. Each indicated eagerness to discuss (first between themselves and then perhaps with the congregation) how our social justice work can include both service work and policy advocacy. Both of their philosophies are that our church’s engagement with social justice ought to include both serving those who are suffering and working to change structural situations that contribute to that suffering. Robin and Stefan are eager to discuss (first between themselves and then perhaps with the congregation) how our social justice work can include both service work and policy advocacy. In particular, Robin emphasized the possibility of finding intersections among our social justice concerns so that we can all feel connected to a larger enterprise as we work on various issues.

They are in agreement with the need to develop a more cohesive plan around three major issues a) Local homelessness, going beyond the current interfaith rotating winter shelter (IRWS) to work with other churches, other communities such as Woodland and to extend programs to include transportation capabilities, potential housing arrangements, and other areas; b) Climate Justice: Determine other regional programs through the UU website; c) Social justice including immigration, possibly racial equality issues, and overlapping of course with the homeless programs we can expand upon. The key to all of this is interactions with other churches in Davis, AND in our area in general, as well as other agencies and working groups. Summarizing the three areas:

1) The homelessness issues seem natural, but must be expanded. Stefan noted in particular that we must regard participation in the IRWS as service and support a policy to address the causes of homelessness as policy advocacy. We can start with discussions with the leaders at Davis Community Church and the Friends (Quakers), who have carried the ball on this so far. For examples we can expand this to include year round services, explore possibilities of interaction with the transportation (bicycle) movement now in Woodland, possibly work with other churches to form consensus and new ideas on transportation, medical issues, food issues, possibly consider a homes for the homeless plan as done in West Sacramento. Of course we would bring the West Sacramento folks into these discussion since they have widest local experience in expanding services to the homeless.

2) Climate and environmental justice: This has been another core of social justice for us, in particular through the Cool Davis initiatives. But much more can be done, by including environmental justice issues related to for example transportation (bicycles), movements of oil trains through our area, water rights, etc. Again interactions with other churches are key to making these more universal concerns and issue. According to a recent sermon by visiting minister Kurt Kuhwald, thousands of people of faith and conscience within Unitarian Universalism and beyond have mobilized to expand our impact on climate justice. UU churches were invited to endorse Commit2Respond which to date our congregation has not yet done.

3) Social justice and action issues. Robin and Stefan’s combined experience in social action activities includes local, state and federal work in both service and policy advocacy; they are eager to discuss (first between themselves and then perhaps with the congregation) how our social justice work can
include both service work and policy advocacy. Currently we have a relatively small racial justice committee in our church, and this could be the nidus for a much more extensive programs in our county and beyond. Immigration is the other major ongoing issue, and we have already heard critiques in small after-church groups from Ramon and Cruz Reynoso. More is required to determine clear directions. In this regard, Robin pointed out that she has been involved with the UU Justice Ministry of California as our church’s ambassador to the Sacramento Valley and Sierra Foothills cluster of UU churches of which Ramon Urbano is in charge. Of great importance is to collaborate with other churches in Davis and way beyond to other churches and our county and regional Northern California. Importantly, both pointed out that the Walnut Creek (Mount Diablo) UU church is way ahead of us, and has a large part of its website devoted to social justice issues they are involved with.

Summarizing, three major areas have been identified for major new initiatives of our church members. Social Action is an area that can involve many church members of all ages, some extremely energetic, others with great wisdom to share. And we are located in about the center of Yolo County with many more communities to reach out to both in Davis and well beyond, since these are nearly universal themes. Our goals should be to find intersections among our social justice concerns so that we can all feel connected to a larger enterprise as we work on various issues. The underlying approach is to serve those who are suffering and work to change structural situations that contribute to that suffering. Last, Social Action has always been a principal tenet of UUism through our history, and we just need to get on the bandwagon. We have identified two very experienced church members, Robin Datel and Stefan Harvey, to put their heads together and come up with inclusive initiatives that can excite and involve church members of all generations.

APPENDIX F

DREAM TEAM PROPOSALS WITH LEADERS AND VOLUNTEERS

SOCIAL/CLIMATE JUSTICE AND INTERFAITH WORK TEAM—Of the original 30+ members who expressed interest in this category, 10 committed individuals attended a later strategy meeting on May 3, 2015. Subsequent discussions led to interviews and selection of two co-leaders, who will identify and invite activists to develop and implement the recommended processes. Our committee concurs with their plans to:

- Form one or more teams to collaborate with United for Racial Justice and Green Sanctuary groups, other regional UU churches, local/regional faith groups and socially active secular groups within our region to address social and climate justice issues which may include homelessness, climate change and economic inequality. (See APPENDIX E—Social Justice Report.)
- Leaders—Robin Datel and Stefan Harvey.
- Committed team members—Charles Halsted (Dream Team facilitator), Ann Halsted, Pat Moore-Pickett, Lynn Nittler, Ramon Urbano, Maria Tebbutt, Evie Parker, Anne Hillman, Doug McColm, Judy Moores, Joyce Takahashi, Alex Lee-Jobe, Barbara Clutter, Lee Ann D’Amato.

ENHANCED PHYSICAL SPACES TEAM—is empowered to consult with the Children and Youth and Adult Religious Exploration Committees to determine what physical space needs are ideal for the Children and Youth Religious and Adult Exploration programs to thrive, and then erect a
Religious Exploration building closer to the sanctuary/meeting hall as in the “Master Plan” from 2008. Exploring the financial feasibility of this proposal is essential; as is a congregational vote.

- Leaders—Jenny Kobold (would co-lead)
- Committed team members—Brianne Beisner, Diane Evans, Betsy Flynn, Walt Fulde, Sarah Keith, Suzanne Kimmel, Virginia Thigpen, Bob Young, Ron Wike, Mair Winger.

OUTREACH/GROWTH TEAM—Is empowered to investigate and pursue improvements to our visibility in our community and the wider region; making our name more inclusive of all those who are attending or may consider attending; upgrading our web presence and networking tools. Additional ideas included innovative signage to make our presence better known to people in the community, and publicity strategies.

- Leaders—??.
- Committed team members—Katie Henry, Mair Winger.

OUTREACH/GROWTH—Explore outreach strategies with the Membership Council which include augmenting efforts at orienting and communicating with new members, strengthening efforts to retain members, and intensifying outreach to young adults and young families. Further ideas included new means of improving transportation to the church, bringing our message to those who live remotely or are home-bound, and developing a new member mentoring program.

- Members committed to this—Mair Winger, Ann-Catrin Van, Karen Urbano, Heidi Li, possibly Katie Henry (wants to improve church accessibility).

SPIRITUALITY/EDUCATION AND WORSHIP—Work with the Senior Minister and worship associates to increase the variety of worship and worship elements offered.

- Members committed—Amber Harris and Jack Whitsett.
- Work with the Adult Religious Exploration committee to offer curriculum about the Abrahamic faiths and about spirituality from a Unitarian Universalist perspective.
- Members committed—Ted Swift and Jack Whitsett.

ENHANCED RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION FOR CHILDREN—The Dream Team appreciates the members (Brianne Beisner and Walter Fulde) who have agreed to join the Children and Youth Religious Exploration Committee and proposes that:

- The Children and Youth Religious Exploration Committee continue their efforts to further integrate our children and youth into the church community spiritually and spatially, as well as to empower youth leadership.

ENHANCED CONNECTIONS WITH EACH OTHER—Explore with the Membership Council ways of furthering our connections outside of Sunday services and resuming the neighborhood groups

- Committed team members—Karen Russell, Heidi Li.

Emphasize to the Pastoral Care Council the continued desire for pastoral care funding and organization.

- Leaders—Co-leader: Jill Pickett.
- Committed team member—Joan Stek.