

**Strategic Plan  
for  
Community Unitarian Universalist Church of Plano**



**September 15, 2009**

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## Introduction

In September, 2009, Community Unitarian Universalist Church is a growing church of 213 members. With an average attendance of 166 at Sunday services over the past year (rising to well over 200 in the months of January and February), we are experiencing extraordinary growth that demands appropriate planning to address the needs of the congregation and the community.

Last year, we inaugurated our enlarged and improved playground and dedicated our new memory garden. In September, 2009, we officially opened our new classrooms, adding 1,500 square feet to our available space. These improvements are helping us to serve the many new families with children who have joined us in the past two years.

As a congregation, we have great expectations of ourselves and our church. In the conversations that took place as part of this planning process, members consistently expressed a desire to see the church be more effective and make a greater contribution to the community. This document exists to help articulate strategies for our future and to move us closer to realizing the vision of our membership.

The last plan for the church was the *Long-Term Planning Task Force – Recommendations for Revitalizing CUUC*, completed November 3, 2003. This plan consisted of a task list and was only partially implemented. A Strategic Planning Committee was appointed during the Interim Ministry of Rev. Priscilla Richter, but that committee did not produce a plan.

## ***The Process***

### **Phase I**

In November, 2006, shortly after the installation of Rev. Patrick D. Price as our new minister, the Board of Trustees appointed a committee for the first phase of Strategic Planning for the church. This committee adopted the name “The DreamCatchers” and consisted of the following individuals:

Clifton Rule, Chair  
Brandi Cooper  
Paul Croarkin  
Bill Daffinee  
Michael Holland  
Lori McMenemy  
Grace Morrison  
Bill Snell  
Jan Steck

For the final phase of their work, the committee added a Team of Writers and Artist to put the finishing touches on the Mission Statement and to create graphic designs for use with the Strategic Plan:

Shirley Houston, writer  
Heidi King, writer  
Ian Rule, writer  
Elena Westbrook, writer  
Denise Dittmar, artist  
Mary Jennings, artist

The DreamCatchers' task was to research and gather all the information from the congregation needed for the planning process, and to craft a Mission Statement for approval by the congregation. Assisted by consultants Gary Paramore and M.C. Meador, the team carefully designed a survey and conducted cottage meetings and discussions with church leaders. They completed a detailed report of the findings (see summary in *Appendix*) and then produced the Mission Statement, which was approved by the Board and subsequently by the congregation at its Annual Meeting in May, 2008.

## **Phase II**

In August, 2008, the Board appointed a new committee for Phase II of the planning process. This committee consisted of:

Nelah McComsey, Chair  
Don Arbuckle  
Sandy Farlow  
Michael Holland  
Jan Steck

The Phase II Committee was charged with creating a Vision Statement and a Five-Year Strategic Plan for the church. After initial meetings, the committee agreed to a timeline that would result in delivery of the following:

- A Vision Statement for approval by the congregation at the May, 2009 Annual Meeting
- A Strategic Plan for approval by the Board by October, 2009, and presentation to the congregation at the Fall Meeting in November, 2009

The Phase II Committee spent several months reviewing the research compiled by the DreamCatchers Committee and then began to distill that feedback into a brief statement of the vision for the church. They were again assisted by the Team of Writers from Phase I. The Vision Statement was presented and approved by the Board of Trustees in April, 2009, followed by presentation and approval by the congregation in May, 2009.

During the first quarter of 2009, the team continued to compile a list of goals expressed by the congregation in their discussions with the DreamCatchers Committee. Meetings were also held with new members and with high school youth to fill gaps in our input. The goals were organized into a draft of the plan that was presented to the Board of Trustees, Program Board, and Religious Education Board in a joint meeting on Saturday, May 2, 2009. After feedback from the leadership, the team continued to refine the plan and obtain feedback from additional stakeholders. The current version was approved by the Board of Trustees at the October 20 meeting, and by the congregation at the November 8 meeting.

## **Phase III**

After the approval of this plan, a new Phase III Strategic Planning Team will be appointed by the Board of Trustees. The task of the Phase III team is to monitor the progress against the approved plan between 2009 and 2014, make revisions to the plan as the Board of Trustees deems necessary, and report to the congregation on the progress toward achievement of the goals set out in this plan.

## **The Mission Statement**

Approved by the Congregation May, 2008

Community Unitarian Universalist Church is a congregation of welcoming, diverse, caring, and committed people.

We provide an atmosphere and framework for examining spiritual questions individually and communally; serve by enriching the spirit through words, music, and fellowship; and educate all ages by promoting ethics, a sense of morality and the pursuit of personal and shared truths.

We work together to make our world a more compassionate, just, and respectful place.

## **The Vision Statement**

Approved by the congregation May, 2009.

We will become a dynamic and nurturing religious community that celebrates our human diversity, supports lifelong spiritual growth, and acts for compassion and justice in the larger community

## Executive Summary of the Strategic Plan

The strategic plan is organized into four key sections with broad goals that move us forward in achieving the mission and vision statements approved by the congregation. The sections and corresponding goals are:

- Developing Community – To support one another in spiritual growth while developing and celebrating our church community.
- Developing Individuals – To cultivate the whole person by providing multi-generational opportunities for individual and group spiritual development.
- Transforming the Church – To have a facility and organization that supports our goals as a church community.
- Changing the World – To make a significant contribution to the world beyond the walls of our church.

Objectives are detailed below each goal with key actions, responsible party, and a start/completion timeline summarized below each objective. The objectives and actions outlined reflect input from the congregation, the Board of Trustees, the Program Board, the minister, and other church leaders. The timelines provided are to reflect the most important priorities and to set deadlines for the responsible parties. The Phase III Planning Committee will then monitor the progress toward achievement of these goals.

With the final approval of this plan by the Board and Congregation, Community UU Church will be on the way to fulfilling the hopes and dreams of this congregation and making a meaningful contribution to the world.

## 1. Developing Community

**Goal:** To support one another in spiritual growth while developing and celebrating our church community.

Our sacred community is one where individuals are free to express and explore ideas, concerns, and praises with each other as we each explore our individual and communal spiritual paths in a thoughtful and nonjudgmental environment. As our community grows, we must maintain the strong personal connections that have linked members and friends to one another and to our church for over 30 years, and seek ways to introduce our neighboring communities to our unique and exciting brand of religious, spiritual, and intellectual inspiration. We should also explore opportunities to improve our communal Sunday worship services while continuing to ensure that these services express, support, and explore the variety of ideas and talents present in our community.

**Objective 1.1:** To improve Sunday services by providing more diverse and engaging programs and exploring alternative approaches to Sunday morning worship services.

**Table 1.1: Sunday Service Actions**

Action	Who is responsible	Start/ Complete
1.1.1: Increase the number of guest speakers who are well-known and leaders of other faith communities.	Minister/Worship Committee	2009/2014
1.1.2: Provide a wider variety of musical styles and performances (including children's and youth choirs, guest performers, annual musical Sunday).	Minister/Music Director	2009/2014
1.1.3: Explore options for expanding Sunday morning programming to include religious education before the Sunday service, followed by a multi-generational worship service.	Minister/Worship Committee	2009/2014

**Objective 1.2:** To improve fellowship and enrichment activities by evaluating existing activities and expanding opportunities for participation.

**Table 1.2: Fellowship Actions**

Action	Who is responsible	Start/ Complete
1.2.1 Expand opportunities for and participation in small group ministries (e.g., covenant groups and men's fellowship discussion groups).	Program Board	2009/2014
1.2.2 Establish children and youth choirs.	Music Director	2009/2014
1.2.3 Increase participation in the adult choir.	Music Director	2009/2014
1.2.4 Explore opportunities for nontraditional fellowship activities (e.g., developing a coffeehouse concert series, Facebook).	Program Board	2009/2014

**Objective 1.3:** To improve community awareness of Community UU Church and its spiritual and material contributions.

**Table 1.3: Outreach Actions**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>	<b>Start/ Complete</b>
1.3.1: Renew the Welcoming Congregation program.	Board of Trustees	2009/2011
1.3.2: Actively advertise Community UU Church events, activities, and volunteer contributions.	Board of Trustees	2009/2014
1.3.3: Continue Community UU open house program.	Board of Trustees	2009/2014
1.3.4: Establish an annual “bring a friend to church” Sunday.	Board of Trustees	2009/2014



## 2. Developing Individuals

**Goal:** To cultivate the whole person by providing multi-generational opportunities for individual and group spiritual development.

One of the reasons that individuals and families come to Community UU Church is our successful Religious Education program for children and youth and, more recently, our Adult Religious Education program. As we continue to grow, we need to expand and strengthen these programs and address the gaps in existing programs, such as:

- Lifespan Religious Education (ensuring that religious education programming is available for all ages). This has been expressed as a need on several occasions, including the Religious Education Visioning Session that we had several years ago.
- Young adult programs
- Individual development opportunities
- Leadership development opportunities (included in Objective 3.9)

**Objective 2.1:** To provide religious education for all ages.

**Table 2.1: Religious Education Actions**

Actions	Who is responsible	Start/ Complete
2.1.1: Define an owner for lifespan religious education.	Program Board	2009/2014
2.1.2: Document the current religious education offerings for members of all ages.	New owner assigned by Program Board	2009/2014
2.1.3: Identify and address gaps in religious education programming (e.g. young adult programming, Sunday morning programs for adults).	New owner assigned by Program Board	2009/2014
2.1.4: Develop a defined curriculum for Senior High	Religious Education Board	2009/2010

**Objective 2.2:** To address the needs of members age 18 - 25, establish a Young Adult Program.

**Table 2.2: Young Adult Program Actions**

Actions	Who is responsible	Start/ Complete
2.2.1: Define an owner for the young adult program.	Program Board	2009/2014
2.2.2: Establish a young adult program that includes educational, spiritual, and social opportunities	New owner assigned by Program Board	2009/2014
2.2.3: Explore implementing the UUA's Bridging program for H.S. to young adult.	New owner assigned by Program Board	2009/2014

**Objective 2.3:** To provide a variety of opportunities for individual study that accommodate the different lifestyles and schedules of our members.

**Table 2.3: Individual Study Actions**

Actions	Who is responsible	Start/ Complete
2.3.1: Provide opportunities for individual study including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sermons on the web</li> <li>• Audio and video of services and classes</li> <li>• Links on the web to online resources (e.g., recordings of adult religious education classes and/or copies of class materials)</li> </ul>	Adult Religious Education Committee	2009/2014

### 3. Transforming the Church

**Goal:** To have a facility and organization that supports our goals as a church community.

To address our extraordinary growth, we must make significant improvements to our infrastructure, both the physical plant and the virtual infrastructure (governance, staffing, communication, planning, and membership development).

**Objective 3.1:** To ensure that our growth is addressed by appropriately planning facilities requirements.

**Table 3.1: Facilities Actions**

Actions	Who is responsible	Start/ Complete
3.1.1: To accommodate our growing church, identify and address additional parking needs as soon as possible.	Trustee for Facilities	2009/2014
3.1.2: Appoint a Building Committee to create a building and parking plan that will address potential needs for the next 5 – 10 years. This plan should also address our members' concerns for a greener facility, aesthetic issues, and landscaping. By 2014, a plan should be in place and a projected start date for building should be announced.	Board of Trustees/Ad hoc building committee	2009/2014

**Objective 3.2:** To strengthen the efficiency of church governance and ensure that the congregation and its committees have a clear understanding of the role of all committees and how they fit into the organizational structure.

**Table 3.2: Committee and Board Coordination Actions**

Actions	Who is responsible	Start/ Complete
3.2.1: Clarify the purpose and reporting structure for all church committees. Ensure that redundancies are removed, gaps are filled, and that the organization structure is as streamlined as possible. Ensure that the current structure and reporting responsibilities are documented as well as the desired future structure and reporting responsibilities and a plan for moving to the desired structure.	Board of Trustees/ Program Board	2009/2011
3.2.2 Consider renaming Boards and Committees to clarify the organizational structure and align better with other UU churches and the UUA. This may include having only one "Board".	Board of Trustees	2009/2011
3.2.3 Strengthen the role of the Program Board and staff in church programs and day-to-day operations, with the Board of Trustees focusing on policy and overall strategy and goals.	Board of Trustees/ Program Board	2009/2011

**Objective 3.3:** To accommodate our growth, expand or add necessary staffing for the church.

**Table 3.3: Staffing Actions**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>	<b>Start/ Complete</b>
3.3.1: Expand or add staff positions (in this order): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DRE – expand to full-time</li> <li>• Music Director – expand to full-time</li> <li>• Membership Coordinator – add position (either volunteer or part-time paid)</li> <li>• Volunteer Coordinator – add position (either volunteer or part-time paid)</li> <li>• Sexton</li> <li>• Church Secretary/Office Support – expand hours</li> <li>• Youth minister/staffing – add position (for high school/young adult)</li> </ul>	Board of Trustees/Trustee for Personnel	2009/2014
3.3.2: Ensure that we maintain Fair Compensation standards as staffing expands.	Board of Trustees	2009/2014

**Object 3.4:** To ensure that we are truly a family-friendly church by providing appropriate childcare.

**Table 3.4: Childcare Actions**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>	<b>Start/ Complete</b>
3.4.1: Define the owner for the church childcare program	Board of Trustees/ Program Board	2009/2010
3.4.2: Clearly define and communicate what we offer, including ages served and activities to be included for older children.	Childcare program owner	2009/2010
3.4.3: Identify specific childcare needs by working with parents and guardians; develop and implement a plan to meet those needs.	Childcare program owner	2009/2010

**Objective 3.5:** To increase member involvement by improving church-wide communication.

**Table 3.5: Communication Actions**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>	<b>Start/ Complete</b>
3.5.1: Improve church-wide communication through greater use of electronic tools/web applications.	Trustee for Communications	2009/2014
3.5.2: Explore use of social networks and other mechanisms to increase connectivity among members.	Trustee for Communications	2009/2010
3.5.3: Improve the calendar-planning process to ensure that events are well-planned and publicized in advance and that we avoid duplication of events. Include clear notices about RE events on the calendar or provide a separate RE calendar.	Trustee for Communications	2009/2010

3.5.4: Continue to educate the membership about the transition from pastoral to program church and resulting organizational responsibilities	Board of Trustees/ Trustee for Communications	2009/2014
3.5.5: Develop a plan for addressing communication needs as we move forward.	Trustee for Communications	2009/2014

**Objective 3.6:** To ensure that our financial path is clearly planned several years in advance.

**Table 3.6: Finance Actions**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>	<b>Start/ Complete</b>
<b>Budget Planning</b> 3.6.1: Ensure that the budget is planned several years in advance so that we can address the needs stated elsewhere, including 3.2.2 and 3.4.1.	Board of Trustees/ Treasurer/Finance Committee	2009/2011
<b>Stewardship Development</b> 3.6.2: Ensure that Canvass is a year-round activity.	Finance Committee/ Stewardship Committee	2009/2014
<b>Stewardship Development</b> 3.6.3: In conjunction with the advance planning for budget, develop and implement a multi-year plan for stewardship/canvass.	Finance Committee/ Stewardship Committee	2009/2012

**Objective 3.7:** To ensure that the leadership has a good understanding of the concerns of the congregation.

**Table 3.7: Feedback Actions**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>	<b>Start/ Complete</b>
3.7.1: Conduct a brief annual web-based survey that would give the church leadership feedback about whether we are meeting the needs of members and friends.	Board of Trustees	2009/2012

**Goal 3.8:** To ensure that we successfully integrate new members into the life and activities of the church.

**Table 3.8: Membership Development Actions**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>	<b>Start/ Complete</b>
3.8.1: Ensure that we have a clear path for new members to quickly become involved in projects/activities and make a contribution to the church and the community.	Membership Coordinator	2009/2010

**Goal 3.9:** To ensure development of future church and community leaders.

**Table 3.9: Leadership Development Actions**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>	<b>Start/ Complete</b>
3.9.1: Establish the owner for leadership development in the church	Board of Trustees	2009/2010
3.9.2: Explore the possibility of redefining the role of the "Nominating Committee" to include leadership development	Board of Trustees	2009/2010
3.9.3: Establish a leadership mentoring program	Leadership Development owner defined in 3.9.1	2009/2014
3.9.4: Increase participation in UU training opportunities	Leadership Development owner defined in 3.9.1	2009/2014

**Objective 3.10:** To ensure that the Committee on Ministry better addresses the overall ministry of the church.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>	<b>Start/ Complete</b>
3.10.1: Consider restructuring the Committee on Ministry to align more closely with current UUA recommendations and provide feedback on the overall ministry of the church.	Board of Trustees	2009/2014

## 4. Changing the World

**Goal:** To make a significant contribution to the world beyond the walls of our church.

Our membership has strong feelings about making a contribution to our community and to the world. To accomplish those goals, we must have a well-organized Faith in Action program.

**Objective 4.1:** Create an annual social action plan.

**Table 4.1: Social Action Program Actions**

Actions	Who is responsible	Start/ Complete
4.1.1: Establish a communication schedule that informs our members and community about what we are doing to change the world and how they can become involved.	Faith-in-Action/ Communications Trustee	2009/2010
4.1.2: Define regular forums for discussion of social justice issues that involve both the membership and the larger community.	Faith-in-Action	2009/2010
4.1.3: Identify opportunities to celebrate our successes.	Faith-In-Action	2009/2010
4.1.4: Strengthen our connection with and participation in the UUSC, NTAUUS Social Action network, and Dallas Area Interfaith.	Faith-In-Action	2009/2014

**Objective 4.2:** Raise awareness of our current green action programs and ensure that all future decisions move us forward in becoming a green community.

**Table 4.2: Green Actions**

Actions	Who is responsible	Start/ Complete
4.2.1: Develop a Green Update communication strategy.	Faith-in-Action	2009/2014
4.2.2: Ensure that Community Garden receives broader support from our church organizational structure.	Faith-In-Action	2009/2014
4.2.3: Join the UUA Green Sanctuary Program.	Faith-In-Action	2009/2010

**Objective 4.3:** Involve church membership in making a contribution to our community and the world.

**Table 4.3: Organization Actions**

Table 4.3: Actions	Who is responsible	Start/ Complete
4.3.1: Establish church-sponsored volunteer activities that are well-organized and publicized.	Faith-In-Action	2009/2014
4.3.2: Develop a path for getting new members involved in social action activities.	Faith-In-Action	2009/2014

**Objective 4.4:** Build a greater connection with the Unitarian Universalist community locally, nationally, and worldwide to promote our shared values.

**Table 4.4: Organization Actions**

<b>Table 4.4: Actions</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>	<b>Start/ Complete</b>
4.4.1: Investigate requirements and opportunities for Community UU to become a Teaching Congregation. <a href="http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/ministerialcredentialing/internships/index.shtml">http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/ministerialcredentialing/internships/index.shtml</a>	Board of Trustees	2009/2010
4.4.2: Increase Community UU's participation in denominational affairs by building greater relationships with the UUA and its related organizations (SWUUC, UUSC, etc).	Board of Trustees	2009/2014