

ADAPTIVE CHALLENGES

Triennial Review of the Ministry of Allen Avenue UU Church 2017 January 18th, 2018

Adaptive challenges require significant learning, reflection and investigation in order to understand both the problem and the solution (or set of solutions). In contrast, technical challenges have clearly defined problems and solutions that work when applied effectively and can be addressed in a reasonable amount of time. Typically, adaptive issues keep reappearing over and over again. Adaptive challenges generally require broader behavioral changes in values, beliefs, roles, relationships and approaches to work. Often, adaptive issues need to be resolved before technical issues can be affectively addressed.

The following is an attempt to define our major adaptive challenges reflected in this survey. This approach is recommended by UU Rev. Sue Phillips, *Leading Through Change: The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, July 2013. (Source materials found in Appendix.) Each of the following listed challenge includes direct member survey input.

Summary from Survey Results: Primary Adaptive Challenges

1. **Growing Membership:** There is a very high desire for increasing our membership. A number of approaches were suggested for improving outreach and attracting visitors. There were a series of suggestions on how to better transition visitors to long standing members. Broadly, these suggestions included:
 - a. Improved greeting/ambassador approach; early personal member connection
 - b. Modified newcomer gathering (too much, too soon)
 - c. Matching talents and needs with groups and volunteering efforts
 - d. Can we have an official greeter at the door?
 - e. Newcomer gathering- No one remembers much
 - f. Encourage newcomers to join SEG/other groups (Men's, Elders, Meditation,

2. **Improving Retention of Members:** Those interviewed recognized the need of stronger retention efforts.
 - a. Greater opportunity for church service related fellowship connection. This included an improved physical foyer providing welcoming and engaging space; a fellowship hall; quiet community space
 - b. More small, personal, group activities
 - c. Encouraging newcomers to join Spiritual Enrichment Groups/other groups
 - d. Lose people who are not greeted, connected
 - e. Extend the time in between allowing for more connection

3. **Increasing Volunteering:** Most everyone realized that this is a problem. It was noted as an issue related to RE support, operating committees, ushering, etc. Also, it was mentioned that we have a loss of anchors and a lot of volunteer needs are completed by a small group of seniors. One comment, “(we) need to do better at institutionalizing this.” Some specific suggestions:

- a. Need more guidance to members to engage them (volunteer opportunities)
- b. Match talents to service provided by the church
- c. Focus on sharing gifts (more than financial)
- d. Need childcare cooperative activities

4. **Understanding Church Mission:** There wasn't any specific question about Mission. However, there was a broad range of comments related to church focus and goals.

- a. Some felt we had too many focuses
- b. Others felt we should focus more on spirituality
- c. Not sure a single theme can satisfy UU's
- d. We are connecting people well: integrates RE, mission, something to rally around
- e. Permablitz has allowed outreach to groups with similar values
- f. Goals other than parking lot not completed

Also, there was a number of comments related to social action:

- a. Some come here specifically for their passion
- b. Feel guilty if not supporting
- c. Should the church direct SA?
- d. Typically, 1/3 not interested
- e. Responsibility to church should be encouraged
- f. Now engaged on social action elsewhere
- g. Do we need a social action committee?
- h. What would replace it?
- i. Should have strategic approach to social action

5. **Improving Church Diversity:** Related to our mission statement, a number of people mention our lack of cultural/tradition diversity and the need to grow our younger population. Related to this, the need for more multigenerational groups.

- a. Diversity; new members; ethnic diversity; authentic (not token)
- b. More cultural diversity
- c. Reach young folk in ways that resonate with them, ...
- d. More multigenerational groups and related mentoring
- e. People from different traditions (e.g., Muslims, at Ramadan)

- 6. *Renewing Program Council:*** Those working on operating committees (Finance, Personnel, Building and Grounds, etc.) believe we need a Program Council...with some modifications.
- a. (Need) Program Council back. What happened?
 - b. We have a major loss now that we have discontinued Program Council
 - c. We are upset that Program Council was cancelled. We need the communications across the church/across committees (a general concern)
 - d. The PC was inefficient and should be made more efficient
 - Meet once every month...on the same day
 - No check-ins
 - Moving it along
 - Different room big enough to be comfortable
 - Perhaps do an orientation for anyone who leads a committee
- 7. *Supporting Staff:*** A number of people addressed the issue of staff needs. Some of the needs mentioned:
- a. Full time administration
 - b. High standard for staff
 - c. (Addition) paid staff for committees
 - d. (Improved) Personnel management
- 8. *Finding Information:*** Some of the desired sources of information they stated they didn't have:
- a. A copy of our strategies
 - b. Clarification on rules (How to work with staff, committees, etc.)
 - c. Hard copy directories (committees, etc.)
 - d. How to connect with staff