

# 2017 Allen Avenue Ministerial Review Sessions - Compiled Results

## 1. Fellowship

### In what ways foster friendship and fellowship?

#### *Positive:*

- SEG Groups (7)
- Meet up board
- Dinners (3) – (circle suppers) cross section of members (get people out of their niches)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of month combined RE (2)
- Culture of inclusiveness
- Participation in Committees (5)
- Volunteering, Opportunity to be involved with personally compelling projects, All cooperative activities to accomplish something (6)
- Pastoral care committee
- Elder's and Men's Groups (3)
- Ladies Lunch Bunch
- Fair and other events
- Amazing friendly people, Great people, Familiar people/faces
- Coffee hour (4)
- Pastoral Care Committee
- Memorial services (2)
- Family promise (3)
- Ferry Beach
- Personal connections, like-minded people, common passions
- Whole church community (2)
- Designated welcoming member
- Playground
- Invited to lunch
- Our focus on people
- Intergenerational activities (3)
- People introducing themselves, talking with new comers
- Discussion of Myke's sermons following service
- Compassionate listening sessions
- Classes, small groups (3)
- Joys and concerns, follow up (2)
- Membership Coordinator to plug in new members to Structured activities
- Big events: Church Fair, Auction –all church-wide activities (3)
- Brown bag lunches after service – these have been great when we did them (3)
- Worship

#### *To Improve/Do Differently:*

- Coffee hour: foyer a problem, space issue (6)

- Coffee (Following service)
  - Too much going on – overwhelming
  - Works for some but need more space/another place
  - Not effective for visitors/new members (3)
  - Need more effective reach-out
  - Bring back coffee mugs (Some yes/some no)
  - More ambassadors to greet visitors
  - Create a welcoming space to make it easier for new folks to engage, feel welcomed (2)
- Online list serves or other online way to communicate
- Lack of Membership Committee
- Caring Committee, revitalize (2)
- Loss of established members (“anchors”), individuals reaching out; need more recruiting; outreach; Lose people who are not greeted, connected (4)
  - (Generally wanted more small, personal events based on individuals reaching out)
- Communications/Connections for new people (5)
  - “Ask me” badges
  - Involve & engage newcomers
    - ASAP
    - encourage newcomers to join SEG/other groups (Men’s, Elders, Meditation, Women’s Group?)
    - More social events (new-comer events?)
    - Reach out to nonmembers
- Two services-mostly a problem, (3)
  - disconnect with two services
  - Something between services to connect
  - Extend the time in between allowing for more connection
  - A problem: being kicked out (or asked to stay out) of the sanctuary for choir practice
- Never seem to have a cohesive plan for group activities, Communications problems related to group activities
- Eblast: too much stuff. For others like it as it-can skim. Facebook reaches more people (than Eblast)
- Include interviews with members in eblast
- Miss frequency of spontaneous get-togethers, after church services (4)
  - Need more activities after church
    - Brown bag (2)
    - Group discussions
- Hard to recognize new people at services (2)
  - (wondering if current practice to have new members introduce themselves is working/effective)
- More Activities: Foster intergenerational activities (pot lucks) (4)
  - More musical get-togethers, coffee houses, maybe with meals
- Group musical opportunities, evening events
- More circle suppers (2)

- Compassionate listening sessions - 1 a month, keep them going
- Set up additional SEG groups to meet opportunity
- Opportunity for families to use kitchen, prepare meals for the whole week
- Connect with food coop
- We need to encourage non-members/non-parents involvement in RE
- No handicap accessibility
- Seeing and hearing for some services
- Events at night difficult to attend for some member (e.g., not driving at night)
- Transportation needs
- Monthly meetings where everyone from both services can get together; e.g., harvest festival
- Fellowship Hall - would like a space that is really conducive to fellowship, meeting with and getting to know others – a comfortable place that invites people to sit, spend time, socialize
- Publish hard copy directory to share members' talents, rather than electronic. (2)
  - While it is possible to print from electronic database it is not used in that way
- More follow through on joys & concerns – maybe assign someone to follow up longer-term
- Buddhist meditation group

## 2. Spiritual Development

### In what ways have you experienced personal growth here?

- Sunday Services (General)
  - Sermons (5)
    - Inspiring. Thoughtful, inclusive, politically informative, trusted
    - Topics
    - Myke's sermons – including theme ministry
  - Music (General) (6)
    - Music, Choir
    - Singing in the choir (1)
  - Sunday service, as a whole, well-orchestrated
  - Sunday services provide mooring...valuable
  - Joys and Concerns at 11:00
  - Worship committee services
  - Guest ministers, guest speakers – Sherri Mitchell for example
  - Lay leadership of services, different backgrounds
- Other Services
  - Solstice service
  - Memorial services – wonderful to find out so much about people and their lives
- Mykes' classes on spirituality (5)
- SEGS (General) (9)

- Individual connections (2)
- Connection to larger church
- Well-structured
- Wish we could rotate SEG groups
- Interim minister – led great SEG session
- SEG groups – opportunity to dig deeply into issues, big questions
- Promote SEGs more
- Share a “sample SEG” for people to try it out
- More support for SEGs and facilitators - training
- RE (General)
  - RE programs/leadership (2)
  - Leading RE class
- Adult RE (General) (3)
  - Adult RE classes, big question theme
  - UU info classes (in the past)
  - We need stronger Adult RE (2)
  - Would like to see RE focus more on spiritual elements:
    - More on Christianity and other religions
    - Involved more in the services (both services?)
- Community (General) (8)
  - Conversations with others
  - A welcoming congregation
  - Community of like-minded folks
  - Safe community (2)
  - Being with people who are living well/kind
  - Any projects we do together, e.g., preparing for lay-led service)
  - Building community of peace
  - Events with everyone from church
- Other Activities/Experiences
  - “Common read” discussion (4)
    - “Waking up White” book...good
  - We mostly model kindness
  - Intern-some depth from the younger
  - Consistency: Focus on the Power of Love
  - Passion for a committee
  - Not a big issue for me
  - Freedom to develop your own values
  - Ferry Beach experience
  - The general dynamism...taking it in
  - Working with kids
  - Congregation has a richness of experience, practice and beliefs
  - The Dawn Redwood tree – always inspires (especially with the improvements in the grounds so you can appreciate it without walking in muck)
  - Family Promise
  - UUA seven principles, esp #1
  - Youth programming; Bridging ceremony

- Opportunities to engage across all ages, with youth and adults
- UUs approach to “free & responsible search...”
- Family Promise
- Make committees more of a spiritual activity
- More multigenerational groups and related mentoring
- We (Lay Lead?) can lead more on ministry

### **What could we do better:**

- Group Support:
  - Opportunities for group support, e.g., times of bad news, world concerns
  - Need not be formal, just when things happen we want ways to be together to share the load, discuss
  - Sunday or during the week
  - Maybe just recognition of troubles
  - Be with like-minded folks & sources of comfort, inspirational people & resources
- RE Related:
  - RE- To teach is to grow in spiritual development
  - Wish: RE- Curriculum...what are kids doing? Need more information
  - More RE “fun” and arts and crafts
- Other: Group Related:
  - More structure – classes & SEG on exploring spiritual practices & beliefs
  - More classes with different approaches, different topics
    - E.g., Buddhist practice,
    - Myers-Briggs related to spiritual practice
  - Replicate the SEG experience in other ways to provide getting to know each other deeply
  - LAMP-Do know what it is...need more info/communications
  - More spirit-filled music
  - More adult enrichment – classes that are a one or two session opportunity or those who can’t commit to a 6-week class
  - Some groups: don’t know what they are
  - Make committees more of a spiritual activity
- Other Comments:
  - More participation by many more individuals in services – get to know others as part of services, opportunity to share who they are “present themselves” in the service
  - 2 services means two churches
  - go to spiritual place big enough for everyone, at least once in a while (e.g., outside in our grounds)
  - Bring everyone together more - do more with all generations
  - Allow us to experience/explore other religions/experience
  - Wish kids could have more social action experience
  - Wish more multigenerational activities
  - Wish better use of our land

### **How do you feel about Themed based ministry?**

- A good idea (4)

- Thoughtful material helps
- Theme based ministry good idea...could have been done
- Works for kids
- Not a good idea (4)
  - “Feels forced.”
  - Feels restrictive (2)
  - “Don’t get much out of it
- Not sure (3)
  - Theme-based approach – no strong feelings either way
  - Depends on topic-better lately
  - Not sure how it worked in RE
- More important to minister and staff for planning purposes (2)
  - Has to come from the minister...leadership and modeling (some agreement that others involved)
  - Easier for staff
- Other comments:
  - This could be a way to unite us as UU’s (a mention)
  - Does UUA use the results of these themed based programs?
  - Four weeks is too much. It gets boring
  - Myke doesn’t follow
  - We might use “themes” for other efforts (other element of service, editorials, etc.)

## Worship

What are the strengths of the service?

- General – pacing and continuity (5)
- Repetitious-familiar for some. (3) Like some change too
- Comforting to know what the order will be
- Variety, but centering, comforting
- Consistency that Dale & Myke present – continuity
- Cohesive, focus, quality, substance
- Many people involved in the service (4)
  - Readings, stories, acting, singing, etc.
  - Choir, announcements, time for all ages, etc.
  - Bringing people from community (eg. Belly dancer) great, do more of this
- Emphasis on environmental stewardship
- Welcoming is the first experience for visitors (Laura has made improvements)
- Location – on a bus route, parking is easy, no downtown traffic to deal with
- Dawn redwood (see also improvements) (3)
  - Find ways to incorporate into service (like solstice)
  - Like turning chairs to face tree (sometimes)
  - View of tree outside

- Time for all ages (3)
  - lots of support for Lessons for all ages
  - valuable for both services
- Appreciate quiet moments (2)
- Readings
- Technology
  - Likes having words for the hymns (+/-)
  - Nice to have listening space in foyer
- Likes finding out about organizational activities happening (+/-)
- Something that touches us (?)
- We laugh at least once or twice in many Sunday worship services. We also laugh, often loudly and long at memorial services. (Rcvd via e-mail)
- Holiday services, meaning of holidays
- Pagan services, solstice
- Setting
  - Like facing the wooden wall
  - Wall hangings, carvings are wonderful
  - Banners on the wall (2)
- Worship committee services (4)
  - open, personal sharing of committee members is great
  - Like lay-led services in the summer, too
- Music important (8) Dale, choir, guests
  - Like Dale's improvisations and grasp of music (2)
  - I really like his jazz piano
  - Dale's opening & closing music
  - New words to old Christian music
  - Conveys emotion – Dale, choir
  - A range of music: jazz, Bach, hymns
- Sermons/Myke (8)
  - Strengths - has been amazingly original
  - Thoughtful, appropriate, tied to theme of the service
  - No bad sermons (some average)
  - Very important to me...They are a gem
  - High quality
  - Readings
  - Good - share personality, but in balance
  - Uses mix of intelligence, resources, spectrum and personal.
  - Balance is good
  - Myke has a gift for personal connection in her delivery. Vulnerable and tender
  - Myke can mirror back our sorrows in a meaningful way
  - Myke's thoughtful sermons based on personal life experiences and her tapping into other teachers.

- Myke is willing to be vulnerable, to be open
- Presentation and style of sermon is critical
- Inclusive – accounts for/includes different people, view points
- Topical (2) Well informed – helps me be informed on political issues, local and broader
- Trusted
- Joys and Concerns (2) (+/-)
- ability to share, receive replies from others

## What could we improve about the service?

### Worship service – general

- Stale for some (2)
  - Maybe change the template sometimes – variety
  - More variety in worship services
- Limited topics (1)
  - Need to include more topics and broad interests (beyond environment and her other passions)
  - “I don’t just want causes”
  - Need to address personal development
- Announcements (5)
  - They are too long and already on the bulletin board
  - Same intro every week – the long “welcome” intro feels monotonous
  - Instruction & announcements at beginning detracts from the service
  - Too “biz”, would like a spiritual opening
  - Timing of announcements interrupts the service/the spiritual aspect
  - Separate announcements from beginning (ie put them somewhere else)
- Beginning and ending of service – spiritual focus (2)
  - Beginning of service – start with music and keep us inspired with spiritual focus for the rest of the service, instead of what sounds like a commercial for A2U2 (...welcome to Allen Ave... a long term presence for liberal religion...)
  - End with us holding hands so we are connected instead of then going back into our own space for closing music
  - Process that leads you from “real world” to worship space and then back into the real world at end of service – maybe something like this for special services.
  - Ceremonies, candles, recessional
- Include a time for greeting those adjacent to you ...
- Discussion of \$ detracts
- Bringing people from community
  - More guests
  - People from different traditions (e.g., Muslims at Ramadan)
- Involve kids in the service
- Expand outdoor services
- Lay services-mixed reviews-quality varies (+-)



- Call and response (*several people*) (not sure what this means)
- Services are now running too long (second service)

## Music

- Want more diversity in music (3)
  - Range of music & hymns – improve
  - Integrate more musicians from community & congregation
  - Want more fun, variety and have it more of a community (singing) experience
- Hymns (3)
  - don't always appreciate new words to old music
  - hymnal “boring, lack-luster, safe” Can we use other hymnals?
  - Different styles? More uplifting
  - Don't choose a hymn that is unsingable just because it has the theme in it
- Anthems (1)
  - Sometimes too showy, complex
  - Music doesn't have to be tied to the service (I think they mean choose something uplifting and/or fun rather than “relevant”)
- Challenge for choir to participate in 2 services – big commitment of time
- Piano sometimes just used as a “filler” – disconnected to service and just jazz
- Attendance/Location
  - Churches are losing populations – we need to grow
  - How to address needs of younger people?
  - Our location – off the beaten path (+-)
  - Concern about RE attendance – is there a continued need for 2 services?

## Physical Space

- Sanctuary general appeal (4)
  - Brown wall ugly
  - Feels like worship in a gymnasium – feels barren
  - Interior has 70's décor going on
  - Other churches change decorations
  - Missing one tapestry of birds
  - Side wall (right side of room) needs more light and ventilation
- Air quality (4)
  - Hot in the summer, quality of air is bad
  - Too hot in the summer
  - Need air conditioning
- Seating (4)
  - Seats touching. Need more personal space
  - More of a curve in the arrangement. People can see each other Good idea, but choir problem
    - Would prefer more semi-circular seating arrangement. People get a chance to look at each other

- Seating in sanctuary – narrow aisles for access, esp for new people
- Seating – offer some different, comfortable seating options to meet needs of all –accommodate back-pain issues, mobility challenges, walkers
- Doors – need automatic opener for wheelchairs, walkers
- Foyer/Fellowship hall needs to be bigger (2)
- Coffee hour – not a good space, crowded, hard to move
- Rehearse choir in an RE room to open fellowship space
- RE Wing – more than white on the walls (2)
  - Wish color on the walls

#### Audio/Visual and Technology (4)

- Don't use screen as much as needed. We need to get a little more high-tech
  - We often have sound problems...screen issues
- Audio system is crap – gets in the way of services and events
- Wish lights on faces of speakers
- Using screen more to support music / lyrics for hymns (+/-) (3)
  - Music would be a lot easier, heads less in books, if we had words of music on the screen
  - Wish words to hymns on TV screen (negative for some)
  - Put hymns on screen – save paper and get our faces up out of our books
  - Put other parts of service on screen – use it! E.g., order of service.
- Incorporate multimedia into services
  - Might interest, attract & help retain younger people
  - Reach young folks in ways that resonate with them, their lives and the ways to communicate that resonate with them

#### Other

- Can we have an official greeter at the door? (we do)
- More multigenerational groups and related mentoring (belongs in “fellowship”)
- Service connecting more effectively (use of time between services?)
- More opportunities to volunteer for RE without being locked into the small number of roles requiring long-term commitment (belongs in “service”)

#### **4. Service to The Church/The Community**

- Service to the church (volunteerism) is accomplished by a small group doing most of the work
- Not enough emphasis on sharing our gifts. We focus far more on financial side of stewardship
- Timing for the sharing of our talents is a problem: There is a disconnect between indicating our talent and the use of the talent because we go on summer break in between.

How successful are we in engaging members in internal service activities?

## **Positive:**

- SEG (4)
  - Group service project – fellowship working together – and felt like fellowship ... not work
  - SEG groups very important – e.g., has filled caring connection void a little
- Service work for those less physically able – still able to do a lot while seated
- Some have been successful at recruiting new people to do coffee
- New to UU program – outline opportunities for new members in ways that are easy to find on an ongoing basis ... not just in orientation when folks might remember only a little
- Sally Breen welcoming newcomers felt good
- Name tags great for new people to see our names
- RE does best in recruiting participation
  - RE program for children, youth & senior youth is very good
  - DRE + Committee+ parents
- Fun vs. other committee meetings
- Good food
- Pastoral care is positive (2)
- Choir is great service to church community
- Lots of opportunities for the many talents & skills in our congregation
- Pastoral Care is doing great
- Permaculture

## **What we could do better:**

- We have a major struggle with volunteers
- Challenge – we cannot recruit to the Finance Committee
- We need new folks participating on committees (more volunteers)
- We are not very successful. This is a major area of weakness
- A lot of approaches have been tried, but we are less effective than we were
- Need to do better at institutionalizing this
- Newcomer gathering- “drinking out of a fire hydrant”-No one remembers much
- Paid staff?
- Let people know about SEGs
- We don’t have a formal plan.
- Communicate committees – what, who, opportunities (6)
  - showcase the committees more effectively(2)
  - Should we do the fair again?
  - Bring back “Opportunity Sunday”(4)
  - Provide list of committees that need members
  - On paper, website (2) (“click for more ...”), bulletin boards
  -
- Alternative activities (3)
  - Finding the right fit
  - Eliminate road-blocks to new ideas

- Find a way to let volunteers do what they want to volunteer, even if it doesn't fit neatly into an existing program/process
- Long term volunteering takes time away from short term volunteering
- Provide opportunities other than during work day
- Communicate alternatives more, better (3)
  - Use social media, with spreadsheet on line of events, classes, etc.
- No caring connection: It's important to have members visit elderly/hospital
- Recruitment depends on head (chair?)
- Choir director:
  - forgets we are a volunteer choir
  - time wasted on logistics
  - is (he too) legacy? Feedback
  - we need to take time off once-in-awhile. Don't want to be always available
  - anyone should be able to sing if they want to
- Most of our volunteers are in the second service
- We have a major loss now that we have discontinued Program Council
- I read about the talents people have and call them to see if they will work on the B&G committee. I've had no luck attracting people
  - Provide more opportunities for service to church for those less physically mobile, tasks to complete while seated
  - More communication to SEG leaders about diverse opportunities to serve needs of the church, beyond coffee, ushering...
  - Designate someone to meet with new folks each Sunday (flower?, coffee cup?)
  - Name tags – how to get them and how to replace when lost/worn
  - Minister to each other more
- Lots of parents not being reached
- We need greater participation...get some from home
  - Need to keep personal contact (4)
    - Charlie Peck and Jack Berman style
    - reach out to people, individual to individual, to identify where they can fit and invite them to participate
    - Mentor for each new person joining AAUU & committees (2)
    - I filled out new member form but there was no follow up – no one contacted me
- Need childcare cooperative activities
- We need better child care or we can't volunteer for non-RE committees/activities
- 
- Membership and stewardship seem to be slipping...what are we going to do?
- What happened to circle suppers?
- Susan mentioned that she would take responsibility for Circle Suppers. She was told by Laura B. that it was tried before and didn't work. We are going to try another approach.
  - 
  - Have long-term members re-do their volunteer forms to reengage, understand where they are now

- Need more guidance to members to engage them – give them structured opportunities
- Identify gifts/talents we're looking for & get them engaged
  - Maybe conduct a forum (e.g., focus group) with process to clarify the needs and engage folks to meet those needs
  - Build a fellowship hall- comfortable place to congregate (to get to know people and connect to engage them in life of, service to and activities of the church)
  - How do we get people to come back to the sanctuary to socialize after 2<sup>nd</sup> service?
- Many committees have “older” hard to bring in younger
- Work days are poorly attended by those who work
- Still need better system for ushering sign-up (mixed opinion on this)
- Problem: Driving after dark
- Need training for serving and leadership (2)
  - Make it easy for new members to join committees – sometimes they seem less than welcoming .. like a club that is daunting to break in to

## **How successful are we in engaging our members in service activities in the larger community?**

### **Positive**

- Social action-lots of topics (4)
  - Great in past (2)
  - we have a lot of social action by our members that we don't acknowledge (2)
  - We are seen as a church doing things “walking the talk”
  - We are still known to many in Maine/MUUSAN as the social action church
  - Some come here specifically for their passion.
- Family promise (6)
  - Training was amazing
- Caring Connection was great
- Permaculture (3)
- Preble St volunteering – good structure, system, going well (2)
- Black Lives Matter
- Environmental focus
- Myke getting people interested and involved
- Church sponsoring and doing things as a whole
- We are very visible (UU overall?) We have only 25 congregations and 2,100 members. A lot of visibility for our size.

### **What we could do better:**

- Should have strategic approach to social action (9)
  - Increase connection, awareness of MUUSAN and statewide causes
  - Increase visibility

- Communicate social action efforts in context of A2U2 mission
- Communicate what the church is committed to
- Clarify role of the church
- Connect & raise awareness of members' efforts that are not directly church-affiliated
- Perhaps increase focus on fewer activities
- Get board approval for big projects
- Have social action committee approve smaller projects
- Identify gifts/talents we're looking for & get them engaged
  - Communicate; create database of activities
  - Language teaching, vocational services, etc.
- Build on Family Promise
- Work with refugee & immigrant populations
- Recognize and acknowledge that not all members interested in active involvement in social action (4)
- Family promise:
  - 1/3 not interested (not happy?)
  - Caring Connection – now defunct – can we reinvigorate?
  - Meals, organize services, doctors appt drivers
  - Recruit new volunteers (2)
    - Hard for families with kids to do evening meetings and social actions (3)
    - Create more opportunities/events for families
    - session on “Being a UU Parent”?
    - Have meetings all on same night, provide child care
    - Time/term limits for committee commitments, not locked in for life

### **What about an all church focus (as part of strategic planning)?**

#### **Positive:**

- Environment yes, ... but was also spiritual development
- Some believe the parking lot would not have happened without that much focus
- Yes! Connected people well (3)
  - integrates RE, mission, something to rally around
  - Broad focus offers many components/ ways for people to connect
  - Permablitz has allowed outreach to groups with similar values, e.g., Resilience Hub
  - More publicity for our activities & outreach opportunities

#### **What we could do better:**

- Do more all church focus on
  - Welcoming congregation
  - Landscape, building renewal
  - LGBTQ
  - Solar
- Can a theme satisfy UU's? Not sure
- Too many things happening – more focus (2)

- Where can I find the strategic plan?
- Church focus should be spirituality. Social action/community activities are OK, but church should not coerce (“twist arms, guilt”)
- The environmental focus went on too long...could have been shorter
- Not clear whether the permaculture is continuing...
- Goals other than parking lot not completed: E.g., solar, heat pump, community garden

## 5. Outreach

### How important is it to have A2U2 grow as a congregation?

#### Positive:

- We have some activities that promote outreach (3)
  - Demonstrations & other events with our members participating (flags, banner, posters)
  - Soup Kitchen
  - Food Pantry
  - Project Feed
  - Family Promise
  - Harvest festival
  - Permablitz
  - Spaghetti dinner / caroling
  - Family activities
  - Volunteer coordinator
  - PARTIES!

#### Could do better:

- Need to grow (9)
  - “this issue is huge”, Very important to grow

Why (note: some of the “why”s may also be “how”s)

- The committee has few active members and the younger members see too much “gray hair” at the meetings
- Grow or die
- We are a wonderful community and we need to grow but we are not working at it now.
- We’re older, white, less diverse
- We’ve lost members who are important to the life-blood of the church ... and we’ll lose more...
- Sustainability
- Attract new members
- Diversity; new members; ethnic diversity; authentic (not token)
- We need to grow enough to be financially stable.
- We, of course, have to replace members (4)
- We apparently have 60% new members for the last 13 years
- Aging
- leaving

- We don't have much outreach (to bring in new members)
- We need to actively promote to grow...and we need to grow
- New members = new outlook, diversity, new energy
- Would be great to have everyone at one service
- Attract more youth
- More cultural diversity
- We're mostly older and white – this is a challenge
- Very important to grow
- Stagnation is bad
- Need new blood
- Important to get our message to the world
- To people looking for something they can be part of as an ethical, moral community
- To bring in those who are disenfranchised
- To families with children – moral, ethical place to help guide children's development

#### How

- Need to work at it - we are not working at it now
- We need to advertise (5)
- Facebook: followed by over 1,000 people
- We should advertise in free newspapers
- Advertise to broader community – not just to our membership
- We need \$'s for advertising (3)
- Facebook can provide lots of bang for the buck
- Need more publicity (4)
- We should do more weddings (get more people)
- Raise awareness about AAAUU and recruit through social action and actively promoting who we are when we are out there
- Participating in community organizations on common causes
- Establish links with others
- Family promise
- Speaking at rallies
- Letting people know who A2U2 is (like our bumper stickers did)
- 
- Writing letters to the editor as AAUUs
- Find and Use UUA resources to reach out and say who we are to the community
- Hardly anyone knows who we are. We do need to get the word out as to what we are and how that's meaningfully differentiated from other religions
- Increase retention (5)
- Examine why people have left (not enough support?)
- People feel lack of connection – want to feel valued.
- Once we have people here we need to invest in keeping them by connecting them with meaningful activities, fabric of the church
- Make it feel like home
- Get people involved right away – ushering, etc.



- Circle suppers, pot lucks
- Again, need a comfortable place to sit, socialize, get to know one another
  - Coffee hour
  - Discuss sermons
- We need training on how to do outreach (Members or congregation?)
- Need to better connect our name to Social Action activities (individual and group)
- To carry our message/a message of some kind (3):
- Tee Shirts
- banners
- signage
- Tag line/brand
  - Have community members come into church to speak – do more of this
  - Let our members know about MUUSAN and our role
  - More community members, thought leaders, multicultural reps speak at church
  - Clarify “rules” for doing things at church
  - Host events to bring people in
  - We have space – space is valuable.
- Use that value to host events in partnership with others who have same interests & values
- Host events to serve the community AND to show and to tell the community who we are
  - Events we already do, e.g., demonstrations – organize them better and use them to get our name out to the community in an organized fashion
  - Known in the community?
  - We don’t evangelize/promote. Should we?
  - Reach out to folks in need of a spiritual community...elders and young families
  - Retention important
  - Don’t burn people out
  - We have people folks who come other times than Sunday. How we can welcome/help instead of asking how they can serve
  - New to UU session not attractive. Too much.
  - More welcoming greeters (like Berman, Peck)
  - Church sponsoring and doing things as a whole
- Develop & share clear list of what church is committed to
- Not clear now what we are doing
  - Be more diverse, but not token – need critical mass of diversity
  - ???What do other churches do well to bring in younger people? What can we learn from them?

Concerns as we grow:

- Challenge of space as we grow
- How do we continue effective programs with more people?
- Stewardship dwindles when we need more financial
- Not comfortable with the idea of needing growth (1 person)
- Some members get freaked out about the concept of marketing
- Challenge: size of building makes growth tricky

- Demographic challenge – small population relative to number of churches
- Facility limits the size we can grow to – let's be thoughtful
- 

Other comments related to outreach/growth

- Some say growth, some said just replace
- Most everyone wants to stay a pastoral church
- Stewardship dwindles when we need more financial
- We can grow 10% to 15% in the facilities we have.
- What should Social Action Committee, social action in general, look like?
  - Do we need a social action committee?
  - What would replace it?
  - Would an alternative approach just arise at some point-in-time?
  - Family Promise is a different approach

### **What do you need to reach out to others?**

- Maybe some hard copy to hand out (not much enthusiasm)
- Bring a friend to dinner?
- I really don't think I need anything (it appeared to me that they had not really considering doing much...a few invites over time)

How important is our relationship with the district, UUA, MUUSAN (is this correct?)?

- I don't see it being very important to me, but it needs to be important to the minister, the board, some committees
- We have recently been involved in MUUSAN and getting together with local congregations

### **Process and Procedures**

#### ***Positive:***

- E blast is a very strong communications tool. (4)
- Suspect that very few churches have as good a news/status vehicle
- Church DB functions mostly well
- Myke has been effective at setting process in motion, et., program council and developing leadership
- Can listen or print out sermons from website

#### ***Improvement Opportunities:***

- Committee Volunteering (General\*) (8)
- Committees publicizing what they are deciding and doing – need to keep us all informed
- Maybe highlight 1 committee in service each month
- Do 2 committee fairs per year
- Do committee focus 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month? Each quarter
- Posts about committees & info on website with photos
- Paragraph about committees in eblasts
- How to volunteer – be an usher, do announcements
- We need to find a better process for getting people involved in service to the church

- Personnel management (General) (5)
  - Need high standard for staff
  - Manager who can support and be critical
  - Staff supervising has not been a strength of Myke.
  - We should look for a minister who is able to staff manage...has had staff management training (or willing to get the training)
  - Need to give feedback to divinity schools-ministers need management training
- (Need) Program Council back (5)
  - We are upset that Program Council was cancelled. We need the communications across the church/across committees
  - Program Council. What happened?

\*(General) used for organizing purposes

- Communications (General) (9)
  - How do people find out what's going on? Are we communicating enough or is the issue they don't read what exists?
  - Clarify which bulletin boards have which information
  - Do they know where to go for information (e-blast, website, database, etc.)
  - Is the information disorganized?
  - How about a scavenger hunt event...related to finding information?
  - A real challenge for the board. Communicate more (better) or people pay more attention to the communications?
  - How to connect with staff, e.g., sexton?
  - E.g., organized a class, publicity was agreed to but did not happen, then miscommunications
  - Eblast – make it easy to print individual sections. Make easier to navigate – clean it up
  - We should be communicating our 7 principles more internally and in outreach
  - Need information on how to use Facebook
- Process (General) (12)
  - Process needs follow through
  - Needs to be clear how to do lots of things at A2U2
  - Include who is responsible for what and how to contact them, office staff, etc.
  - No one to call when the bathroom floods – “who you gonna call?”
  - How to get things done here
  - How do mailboxes work? Which bulletin board for what?
  - Need a process of making anti-bias decisions (?) It's not visible
  - Perhaps do an orientation for anyone who leads a committee
  - Maybe a mentorship as well
  - Need to continue to develop leadership
  - We need to ask our members what they want and when
  - Need membership follow-up

- Don't know what's the structure of committees (2)
  - A list of Committees/Services on the wall would help (on wall)
- Better infrastructure?
- The PC was inefficient and should be made more efficient (1)
  - Meet once every month...on the same day
  - No check-ins
  - Moving it along
  - Different room big enough to be comfortable
- Need to revise database (also website) (3)
  - Church DB is a little quirky
  - Include photos of everyone in our database: This would be useful for follow up outreach to joys & concerns
- AV/Tech Issues (General) (4)
  - Equipment for hearing impaired
  - Need knowledgeable A/V person for services, movies, etc.
  - Not using technology (monitor, other)
  - Designated computer for church, connected to systems, rather than rely on individuals' computer
  - Fix internet connection problems, esp in sanctuary
- Administration (General) (2)
  - Need full time administration
  - Stronger administrative support (don't have so much on minister's shoulders)
- Visual appearance (1)
  - One person should manage bulletin boards
  - Why bulletins/brochures everywhere? Should be in one place (more welcoming)
  - Clutter in the hall way. Children's clothing, etc. is a problem
- Church Service Related (General) (2)
  - Don't put too much into services – keep service spiritual
  - Not during service: between services & after 2<sup>nd</sup> service (*I believe for announcements*)
- Scheduling meeting space (2)
- Building (General) (2)
  - Restrooms are bad
  - Heating system and air conditioning

## **Intern Minister:**

- Depends on who it is: (2)
- We have had two intern ministers', we probably made a difference with one and one was most impactful to our services
- Interns is the issue for the next minister
- Should do it if:
  - New minister supports it
  - We have additional funding, or a line item approved in budget
  - Perhaps we should be selective
  - Need a stable, established minister to work – takes time, energy
  - brings new perspectives
  - served as back up to minister, fresh energy
  - Good, helpful to minister & congregation

## **Delights:**

- Memorial Services (General) (5)
  - Charlies service
  - Andrea's memorial service
  - Rev. Myke's funeral services
- Welcome received in the door-my peeps
- Music (3)
  - Music and Dale's improve
- SEG (2)
- One on one with Myke when I needed perspective
- Parking lot was good
- Ministers responsiveness to the needs of the congregation
- Permaculture activities (2)
- Affinity groups (3)
  - Sewing group –sit & stitch, for holiday fair, etc.
  - Knitting group
- Community (General) (3)
  - Being part of a place important in community
  - Being in marches with other UUs
- Pastoral care group
- Being part of the service
- Introductory programs
- Child dedication
- Life issues related to coming out, other related LGPT issues
- Family Promise
- Solstice service (2)
- Bridging experience (2)
- Habitat for humanity (a Men's Group activity)
- Adult/kids connection
- Lots of things already shared
- Outpouring of love & assistance when in need, times of grief

- Joys & concerns and support from others resulting
- Sr. youth service – moving, “the reason we decided to stay”
- Support for our youth
- SYG service-love it
- Guest speakers
- Potlucks and Thanksgiving
- RE: To see kids as adults and how important the RE program was for them
- Support during illness
- Interaction with kids through RE, OWL
- Response to Family Promise
- Angie putting together women’s group
- Working with Myke & with other members

### **Missing/Would like to see:**

- Music Related (General)(2)
  - Choir risers
  - Multiple choirs. 9 am kids
- Caring connection disappeared
- Sermon discussion group (2)
- Black Lives Matter
- More diverse membership
- AAUU bigger presence in social action, like marches
- More racial justice focus/recognition
- Economic Justice
- Return of Circle Suppers
- Linking announcements?
- Adult enrichment programs
- Sliding screen door to back yard
- Get rid of cobwebs in memorial room
- Need younger social action members
- Linkage/connection between generations
- Communicate more about the Seale Social Action Fund opportunity
- Hold dialogues to help us identify & understand who we are as a church – as A2U2 and also within the changing/evolving Unitarian Universalist world.
  - How do we become involved in the greater whole that us UU?
- Fellowship Hall (3)
  - Comfortable gathering place to connect with others, build community
  - Quiet, welcoming place for fellowship (not foyer) – with couches, comfortable seating
  - ...
  - Quiet welcoming space; Fellowship Hall, larger foyer
- Labyrinth
  - To honor our dead/memorial space
- GA local digital presence (on monitor)
- A Chapel- Meditation space, quiet, small, accessible

- Covered entryway
- Van
- Big membership, thriving (2)
  - 1,000 more people wanting to become UU's

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### Feedback on Interview Approach

- Timing was pretty good –helpful to have timekeeper (10 minutes per section). No major negatives mentioned related to the specific questions.
- It would be useful to get some ranking from the congregation: How important are some of these issues and topics?
  - Use of dots? Show of hands? Written feedback?
- The “bubble-up” (allowing the most important information rise to the top) is helpful, but there may be some issues with that approach:
  - Each group interviewed might focus on different issues/opportunities.
  - Just because a topic gets a lot of attention does mean that is a priority
- We could use a better close on the interview.
- We did not ask for/generate any information from the opening meditation focus introduction.
- Better definitions, separation of the categories would have been helpful.
  - Service from Social Action from Growing a Community from Outreach
  - Clarity would help move the effort forward
- What topics would the board like us to focus on (The board will provide us additional requests for information)?
  - (John H) From the congregation: How do you do church?
  - Address infrastructure issues:
  - IT, database working for them?
  - How do they source church related information?
  - What communications works best for them?
    - How does social action/social action committee fit into the infrastructure?
  - Social Action committee, as it now stands, appears to be aging-out
  - Younger members appear do not related to the present Social Action Committee

- Do we need a Social Action Committee?
- Will another way of looking at social action organically form?
  
- How does the congregation feel about membership growth/lack of it?
- Are we meeting their spiritual needs?
- It should be fun for members to participate...they want to input