

Transitioning From Family Size to a Pastoral Size Church

A Strategic Plan for the Unitarian Universalists of Gettysburg

2023-2026

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UUG was founded in 2001 and we are now celebrating 22 years as the liberal religious congregation in Gettysburg and the surrounding area. We have always been a family sized church, that is, (per UUA guidelines) with attendance of 0-50. While our church official membership has been at 53 for a number of years, the church is growing in our community outreach. Over the last several years we have expanded our presence in the greater community by the establishment of a Pagan study group, Animal Ministry Committee, the adoption of the 8th Principle and the Pledge to End Racism, active involvement in the Gettysburg Ministerium, outreach and engagement with the LGBTQIA+ community, participation and leadership in the Afghan Refugee Resettlement Coalition, and the technology upgrades including the use of Zoom for Sunday services. We are attracting more people to services and greater participation in our "side-door" activities, such as the monthly Vegetarian Potluck, the UUG Book Club, and the Bruce Boneau Discussion Forum. This year we appointed a volunteer Building Coordinator. A job description for volunteer Office Administrator was written, however there was no volunteer. We will expand the job description and plan to hire a paid Office Administrator. Maintaining a church calendar and internal communications is a key role and is a high priority this year.

Our church is growing, and changing as we transition from a Family Size congregation where everyone knows everyone to Pastoral Size (50-100). Faces look familiar but we don't have the same close relationships, and we may not know everyone. Congregational growth is not an end in itself, but something that can enable us better to serve ourselves and our community in keeping with our fundamental mission that was adopted at our inception in 2001: *"The Unitarian Universalists of Gettysburg join together as a religious community that inspires the mind and spirit, honors religious freedom and embraces diversity. Its members minister to each other with love, and work for a just society."* Growth has always been a goal of our congregation. Now we must grow our structures and procedures to meet changing needs.

The 2020-2023 COVID-19 pandemic caused rapid, unanticipated change. UUG canceled only one Sunday service, and then began a process of rapid, but incremental change. Our Worship Committee quickly researched and acquired Zoom, tutorials, links, and scripts were sent by email. Our Ministers, John Manwell and Phyllis Hubbell, provided real-time sermons from their home and we contracted Lea Morris to provide much-needed music. In time we got comfortable with Zoom, even enjoyed attending services and meetings from home. Hearing impaired members find they can participate better on Zoom than in person. Members who no longer drive regularly join us from home. We no longer need to cancel due to snow, and we enjoy visiting with remote congregations, international, regional, and local. We now have a Tech Committee, large video monitors, remote-control camera, music videos, photos and graphics to enhance our services. Rev Cindy Terlazzo has brought new energy, and new connections to UU congregations in the region. She organized a "Revival" picnic to bring four churches together, and collaborated with fellow ministers to bring variety and new energy through quarterly pulpit exchange. Attendance has grown, and this recent growth brings new members who are energized and engaged. We have Chalice Circles, a new youth group, Animal Ministry Committee, Pagan study group, the choir is back once a month,

and Religious Exploration for children is gaining energy. We now know that we can make big changes, incrementally over a short time. UUG has grown in numbers and functions. Our main mid-term challenge will be growing the organizational structure and communication paths required of a larger, more complex church.

This three-year, rolling Strategic Plan for July 2023 thru June 2026, is based on assessment of our current resources and energy. The intention is to update this plan each church year to document and archive the current year, and to add new general visions for the third year looking forward.

In early 2023, the Strategic Plan Task Force conducted a survey of members and friends of UUG which revealed many strengths and a few challenges perceived in our church. The task force conducted conversations with members and friends focusing on strengths, weaknesses, and long term visions of the congregation. Board members, Committee Chairs, and our Minister, Rev. Cindy Terlazzo, were interviewed for their views from the perspective of their role in church governance. Using the observations and data collected we have analyzed, organized, and consolidated the information and present it below using our current Church Organizational structure. UUG is currently organized by: Board of Trustees, Worship Committee, Membership Committee, Stewardship Committee, Finance Committee, Faith and Community Committee, Aesthetics Committee, Animal Ministry Committee, Committee on Ministry, and Technology Committee.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The UUG Board of Trustees (Board) is entrusted by the congregation for oversight and governance of the church as a whole. Large, or especially controversial issues are decided by vote of the congregation during a congregational meeting. To facilitate oversight and communication, the Board requests committee chairs participate a board meetings each quarter. As UUG transitions to a pastoral size church, good communication is essential to coordinate the increasing functions and complexity. The Board needs to continue to be transparent in decision making, encourage committee chairs and members to attend meetings, and post minutes of the meetings and financial summaries. In the words of Board President Din Zigler, 2022/2023 has been a “rebuilding year”.

Goals 2023/2024:

- Establish a Ministerial Search Committee and provide guidance on the requirements and desired characteristics of our next Minister. Decide if hiring quarter-time or half-time before a search begins.
- Hire an Office Administrator for church office tasks and to assist the Worship Committee with regular clerical tasks, such as publishing the Order of Service.

- Consider funding and hiring a part time Religious Exploration (RE) professional.
- Create an organizational chart of church governance to describe the current structure of standing Committees and their Subcommittees, ad-hoc Task Forces, and Coordinators.
- Evaluate the organizational structure as we grow from Family to Pastoral size.
- Provide regular training for board members and leadership. The UUA Leader Lab website offers many online training resources.
- Encourage regular social engagement between committee chairs to facilitate communication.
- Ensure financial audits and required reports are done on a regular basis.
- Establish a liaison to coordinate UUG activities with the larger community (i.e. Ministerium, SCCAP, Gettysburg College) to improve communication and provide a contact person for UUG.

Goals 2024/2025:

- Evaluate the building and grounds facility needs to determine when research into local real estate or a rental facility is needed.
- Review current bylaws for any needed changes and post the bylaws.

Goals 2025/2026:

- Determine timing and requirements for a half-time minister

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Since the start of UUG in 2001 we have been fortunate in having strong leadership of the Worship Committee. We have also been fortuitous in the ministers who have served our little red church, starting with Rev. Ron Crawford, then Rev. Kate Bortner, husband and wife team Rev. Kerry Mullen and Rev. Dave Hunter, husband and wife team John Manwell and Phyllis Hubbel, and now, Rev. Cindy Terlazzo. The Worship Committee is, without a doubt, the busiest of all the committees and carries the heavy responsibility of providing meaningful Sunday services to address the myriad of beliefs within our congregation. Zoom created additional responsibilities for the Worship Committee and requires that the Worship Chair and Committee Members be technically proficient. What happens in worship can energize and affirm members and their families, deepening their sense of belonging and commitment. What happens in worship will also give visitors their crucial first impression of what Unitarian Universalism and UUG is like.

Goals for 2023/2024:

- Be an active participant in the search for a new minister to replace Rev. Cindy Terlazzo in 2024, at the end of her extended contract.
- Recruit a co-chair for the Worship Committee to share responsibilities such as the production of the weekly order of service and sending out emails to the congregation on worship services, and engaging in researching musical resources for Sunday Services.
- Prepare a succession plan for Worship Chair that would include identification and training of replacement to ensure smooth continuity of worship services
- Recruit and train 2 additional worship associates

Goals for 2024/2025:

- Work with new minister for smooth transition
- Evaluate the need for additional worship services or “focus” services throughout the year, such as a Christmas Eve service, outdoor “picnic” service, Vespers Service, etc.
- Work with the Gettysburg Ministerium through UUG’s representative to participate in their Christmas holiday and Easter holiday service so UUG is seen as a viable alternative in the Gettysburg area.
- Expand our outreach to other UU churches in the immediate area to include York, Cumberland Valley, Frederick, Hagerstown, Boiling Springs, and others to have joint services or activities.

Goals for 2025/2026:

- Work with the board in building a job description for a half-time minister, if it is financially viable for the organization.
- Set the expectations of the congregation for a half-time minister. Ensure that the congregation understands that half-time still means the minister would only be in the pulpit twice a month.
- Evaluate the need for a second Sunday service.

MEMBERSHIP AND FRIENDS COMMITTEE

Membership and Friends involves responsibilities that start from the moment a person first attends a Sunday service. Greeting at the door, keeping track of attendance, updating our directory of members and friends, acquainting people with the steps toward membership, hospitality, caring for people, and supporting the social activities of groups within the congregation, all fall within the realm of Membership and Friends. Support from the entire congregation is needed for the larger work of inviting, welcoming, and integrating newcomers in the congregation.

Our official membership as reported to the UUA is 53 members. Of those members 39 live in the Gettysburg Zip Code, 5 in Hanover, 5 in Ortanna, 5 in New Oxford, 3 in Biglerville, 3 in Fayetteville, 3 in Fairfield, 3 in Littlestown, 2 in Gardners, 1 in Waynesboro, 1 in York Springs, 1 in Hampstead MD, and 1 in Thurmont, MD. Our directory consists of approximately 80 names, and our attendance at Sunday Services on-site and on Zoom has steadily increased over the past two years.

The response from our recent 2023 survey and conversations with members and friends show that many people responded to the warmth and welcoming found when they walked through the doors of UUG.

Goals for 2023/2024:

- Prepare a succession plan for Membership Chair that would include identification and training of replacement to ensure continuity of membership responsibilities.
- Review the recent time, talent, and treasure survey and contact each member/friend to ensure they feel included and their talents are being utilized.
- Encourage our long-term friends to consider membership.
- Team with Stewardship in conducting the New UU classes to include how the church is financed and understand their commitment of financial support.
- Team with the Faith and Community Committee in our consistent goal of diversity and inclusion within the congregation.
- Work with the Board or designated Task Force on a plan for Religious Exploration classes for children.

Goals for 2024/2025:

- Research grant opportunities to bring on a quarter time Religious Exploration professional.

Goals for 2025/2026:

- Establish teams within the Worship Committee for greeting, caring, and Religious Exploration for children

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

The Stewardship committee has the responsibility of fund-raising for the church and for the annual Stewardship campaign.

Goals for 2023/2024:

- Work with the Membership Committee to ensure that the New UU class includes information on how the church is funded and that potential new members understand the financial commitment.
- Work with the Finance Committee to monitor pledge revenue on a quarterly basis.
- Review the viability of bringing back the grocery card fundraising program.
- Review all fundraising efforts to determine effectiveness.
- Solicit ideas from congregation and others for additional revenue streams.

Goals for 2024/2025:

- Develop and publish an annual plan for fundraisers.
- Consider “small focus” fundraisers for specific items, such as a Mother’s Day fundraiser for new hymnals or a St. Patrick’s day fundraiser for a dishwasher.
- Work with Finance Committee on a more seamless pledge campaign.
- Recruit additional members to the committee.
- Recruit additional members for the Auction subcommittee.

Goals for 2025/2026:

- Consider partnership with outside organizations for fundraisers, i.e. PFLAG, SPCA, Heritage Festival, and Farmer’s Market.
- Work with UUA to establish a Legacy Program for UUG members.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee manages the monies for UUG. They pay the bills, manage the approved budget, and provide regular financial reports.

Goals 2023/2024:

- Evaluate the benefit of increasing investment of UUG long-term savings into the UU Common Endowment Fund to foster our commitment to our UU values.
- Work with UCC on creative financing or barter to improve our current facility.
- Work with the Stewardship Committee quarterly to review the status of pledging and donations.

Goals 2024/2025:

- Review accounting systems and update to meet UUG needs.
- Consider new methods for electronic donations.

Goals 2025/2026:

- Study the feasibility of a new facility.

FAITH AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

This group seeks to fulfill its spiritual mandate to pursue social, economic, and racial justice and create a better community. They work to end racial discrimination and injustice.

Goals for 2023/2024:

- Continue to move forward with the “Pledge to End Racism” by working with leadership in the local community
- Provide regular updates thru all UUG resources on pertinent social/racial justice issues
- Participate in local school board meetings to advocate for social/racial justice
- Participate in the Annual Martin Luther King Program at Gettysburg College.

Goals for 2024/2025:

- Establish liaison with the UU Pennsylvania Legislative Action Network (UUPlan) to advocate on a state level.
- Promote and advertise local events that share UUG social justice goals.
- Explore partnership with the Interfaith Center for Peace and Justice (ICPJ) and other local social justice organizations.
- Collect information on the social justice efforts UUG members and friends are involved with to foster connection and collaboration.

Goals for 2025/2026:

- Work with local UU churches to sponsor social justice education and action.

AESTHETICS COMMITTEE

The Aesthetics Committee is responsible for the beautification of the interior and exterior of our building. Aesthetics also manages the current practice of displaying local artists, participating in First Friday events, seasonal decorations in the window areas, floral arrangements for the front of the church, as well as the maintenance and replacement of banners, tablecloths and other kinds of decorations in the church.

Goals for 2023/2024:

- Provide regular First Friday events, including advertising the events within UUG and the local community.
- Coordinate installation of new kitchen cabinets and the painting of the kitchen.
- Regularly inventory kitchen supplies and coordinate the purchase of replacements.
- Work with the Building Coordinator and Trinity UCC to have the front door of the church replaced and made more secure.

Goals for 2024/2025:

- Establish a relationship with the Building Coordinator and representative from UCC to regularly assess needs of the building and grounds, such as replacement carpet, and interior paint.

- Work with Building Coordinator and the Board to landscape small front yard area and consider planting a shade garden near the back door.

Goals for 2025/2026:

- Work with the Board to establish a wish list for a new facility within the Gettysburg community.

ANIMAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE

The Animal Ministry serves as a source of nonhuman animal awareness and education for our members by relating the religious and spiritual aspects of our tradition to justice and ethical issues.

Goals for 2023/2024:

- Increase awareness within UUG of the work done by the Animal Ministry.
- Continue fundraising for the animal food program while educating the public on nonhuman concerns.
- Encourage individuals in the congregation to explore the possibility of a more plant-based diet. Inform those of the environmental and health benefits along with the compassion toward animals.
- Hold events that remind the congregation of the blessings of all living beings in our lives. These connections help us live more fully and authentically.
- Build a reliable funding stream to continue support of dog and cat food programs through local food pantries and Meals on Wheels.
- Partner with outside organizations to conduct vegetarian cooking classes.
- Distribute articles from UUAM or other resources on a regular basis to UUG members/friends through all PR methods used by UUG.

Goals for 2024/2025:

- Work with the Worship Committee to build services relating to animal issues, and food sustainability and the environment.
- Consider conducting the Demonstrating our Values through Eating (DOVE) program at UUG.

Goals for 2025/2026:

- Build a local political advocacy group for nonhuman animals.
- Identify practices in PA that are detrimental to animal welfare and inform the congregation. Encourage them to be vocal with the government and groups that can help ban these practices.

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

The UUG Committee on Ministry (COM) was officially formed in 2020 once Rev. Cindy Terlazzo was hired. It is a small group that works with the minister monthly to review all aspects of the congregation's ministry. It acts as an advocate, support, and provides guidance to the minister. The primary task is to produce a formal evaluation at the end of the minister's term. Progress is reviewed monthly and those records are preserved as the basis for a formal evaluation.

Goals for 2023/2024:

- Establish and document a feedback system with the current minister that can be used as input for the new minister search. Get the perspective from the minister on what is good, not so good, and what could be improved.
- Explore ministerial resources on preparing for the transition from Family to Pastoral church.
- Work with the board on establishing requirements for the new minister search.

Goals for 2024/2025:

- The COM was established at the request of Rev. Terlazzo, therefore the board needs to determine whether to continue this committee. If the COM continues, work with the new minister in establishing goals and priorities to ensure a smooth transition from a Family Size to Pastoral Size congregation.

Goals for 2025/2026:

- Establish job description for part-time Minister, coordinating with the Board and committees.

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

This committee was created when Covid forced us to confront the need to conduct Sunday services using upgraded technology.

Goals 2023/2024:

- Recruit and train additional Tech Committee members to provide technical support during Sunday services, meetings, and scheduled events.
- Move the sound system amplifier and equalizer from the front of the church to the tech booth.
- Improve the audio system, including relocating the speakers to a better location.
- Address audio for the hearing impaired, which may be an audio loop or Bluetooth system.

Goals 2024/2025:

- Install a video monitor visible from the pulpit to allow the speaker and Worship Assistant to view the video image.
- Install video monitors downstairs for Religious Exploration programs.

Goals 2025/2026:

- Work with the Board and Worship Committee to determine the technical requirements to support growth and future relocation to a different facility.

SUMMARY

This plan is ambitious but achievable. It is an exciting time at UUG - the past few years of Covid restrictions have made us all realize the importance of our community and our need for each other. Together we can build on our strong foundation and work for more justice and more love in our own lives and in our community.

Goals for this year (July 2023 - June 2024):

- Hire an Office Administrator to maintain order in the church office, screen telephone messages, screen and distribute mail, provide a consistent point of contact, and to support the Worship Committee with weekly clerical tasks including the Order of Service.
- Form a Ministerial Search Committee and begin research to identify talents desired for our next Minister. The proposed budget supports a search for a quarter time Minister.
- Support the current effort to establish a Religious Exploration program, consider hiring a part time RE professional to coordinate this function which is essential for growth.

- Renovate the kitchen for more cabinet space.
- The meditation group has lost leadership and asks UUG to take on this role. It is our hope that a volunteer will step forward to take on the role as the meditation group is well established and is enjoyed by several members and friends of UUG.
- Consider increasing long term investments with the UUA Common Endowment Fund and the Designated Fund for UUG with Adams County Community Foundation.

Goals for the following year (2024-2025):

- Select and hire a quarter time contract Minister.
- Install hearing assistance devices, Bluetooth or audio loop as determined by research.
- Improve security features including the front door, lighting at the rear door, and consider a camera to record motion and activity at the rear door.
- Install a dishwasher in the kitchen to sanitize coffee cups and conveniently wash and store dishes.

Visions and ideas for 2025 - 2026:

- If UUG continues to grow, hire a half-time Minister in the mid-term future in order to allow more time to support church governance and training, in addition to the many functions which are served by a quarter-time Minister.
- If we outgrow our current building, where would we go? Consider an adjunct facility near our current church building to support a subset of functions, such as a social hall with a full kitchen, outdoor space, or office and meeting space to expand our flexibility, functionality, visibility in the larger community and to increase opportunities for collaboration with local groups.