

Strategy for Our Mission

Living the Mission of Our Church



Contents

Preface.....	3
FPUU Core Values.....	4
FPUU Mission and Strategies.....	5
FPUU Church Structure.....	6
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Preface

First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, Kennebunk, Maine

Creating a beloved community. Supporting each other in our individual search for truth and meaning. Affirming the worth and dignity of each human being. Our core values express these and other beliefs common to Unitarian Universalism. There are many paths toward these ideals.

The Strategy presents goals for the FPUU Board of Directors to help move us toward these ideals. It is based on wide input over three years from FPUU members and leaders. Feedback was gathered at congregational meetings, through surveys and at workshops facilitated by leaders from FPUU, the Northern New England District and the Unitarian Universalist Association.

We are at an important point in our church life: at the beginning of an interim ministry, on the brink of a search for our permanent minister and facing the departure of our long-time DRE and church administrator. Though all these changes pose challenges, they likewise present tremendous opportunities for growth. And growth implies action! At FPUU, there are abundant options to act!

UU churches are self-governing. The responsibility for governance is shared broadly within FPUU by: standing *action teams* (committees!), the Board and professional staff. Likewise, responsibility for the ministry of our church is a shared endeavor. Spiritual growth is nurtured through Sunday worship, Sangha, Choir, meditation, small groups, women for all seasons and a host of other programs. Our community events and fundraising activities not only sustain our church, they also forge important links to the community and promote our social justice goals.

FPUU's abundant events/activities/programs *nurture our spiritual growth*. But it goes both ways. FPUU itself must be nurtured: we support and sustain our beloved church by *investing time, talent and funds*. Ours is not a hierarchical organization. Rather, we are a church brimming with diverse opportunities for involvement, all mutually reinforcing and working together to move us toward achievement of our mission.

Join us! We welcome **all**. We invite **you** to share your talent, time, ideas and creativity with FPUU and *move together toward* and into our future with openness and love.

Respectfully, FPUU Board of Directors, 2013

First Parish UU Core Values

Core values describe values shared by members and friends as well as concepts grounded in the principles of Unitarian Universalism. Our *Core Values* encompass those we hold as individuals, those shared by all our congregants and those that guide us beyond the walls of our Church – in our local community and the larger world.

We pursue numerous spiritual growth opportunities and activities to awaken and sustain love, compassion, service and personal transformation. We strive to help individuals discover how spiritual practice, learning and community service can transform and move the world toward peace and justice.

Individual

- Pursue individual search for truth and meaning.
- Pursue lifelong spiritual growth which can sustain, enrich and transform one's life.
- Communicate directly, honestly and compassionately.
- Forgive, make amends and reconnect in the spirit of love.
- Open our minds and hearts to new ideas.
- Celebrate diversity of belief and expression.

Among FPUU Congregants

We nourish our spirit and support each other through communal activities, sharing life's joys and sorrows. We:

- Share the work of ministry, by "ministering" to each other;
- Support each other's growth and development;
- Share responsibility for the "health" of our church by being good stewards of our time, resources and funds;
- Welcome and integrate visitors and newcomers to FPUU;
- Share decision-making; and
- Accept each other and encourage each other's spiritual growth.

Beyond Our church walls we:

- Welcome all (*including UUA certification as a Welcoming Congregation open to LGBTQ community*)
- Address needs in our local community and beyond, by wisely using our resources, time, and funds. A current local priority is *Focus on Hunger*.
- Connect with other UU communities (*including local UU churches, Northern New England District and the Unitarian Universalist Association*).
- Use the democratic process to address issues in society at large.
- Affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person.
- Respect the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Mission and Strategies

All our efforts - whether individually, collectively or in concert with other UU and community groups - support progress toward achievement of our mission:

To be a spiritual community of seekers sharing a common human journey and committed to the betterment of the world

Strategies *(the following strategies will guide progress toward our mission)*

Individual

Participate in deeply meaningful, transforming and open-minded spiritual experiences which include:

- a) Searching for a rich and diverse worship life that nurtures, challenges and inspires
- b) Sharing joy, filling the church with laughter and, sharing pain and sorrow, lightening those burdens that are too great to bear alone
- c) Growing in spirit by opening the mind and heart
- d) Celebrating diversity of belief and expression by communicating directly and honestly
- e) Nurturing opportunities for leadership, learning, and making connections in our Congregation

Congregation-Wide

To be action-oriented and foster and support spiritual growth in order to:

- a) Encourage one another to grow, opening our minds and hearts to new ideas, challenging our assumptions and having conversations that matter
- b) Honor our differences and celebrate each other's gifts
- c) Embrace the spiritual growth of children and youth as a congregational responsibility
- d) Inspire compassion for ourselves and others and deepen our connections through loving speech and deep listening
- e) Share responsibility for the ministry of our church with our minister and through involvement in/commitment to our Lifespan Religious Education programs
- f) Strive to forgive, make amends, and reconnect in the spirit of love
- g) Embrace people of all ages so they feel welcome and connected across identities including race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, politics and education
- h) Manage and maintain our resources and facilities to meet the needs of the church and the community

Beyond our Congregation

Be a visible leader and/or partner, making a positive impact in our community and beyond by:

- a) Participating in programs like Focus on Hunger and Standing on the Side of Love
- b) Conducting spiritual outreach to the larger community
- c) Working with neighboring congregations and institutions around common interests
- d) Advocating in the public arena for liberal religious values in response to prejudice, injustice and oppression
- e) Participating actively in the larger Unitarian Universalist community
- f) Promote environmental responsibility and sustainability
- g) Striving to build a loving, just and peace-filled world
- h) Actively promote and understand our part in the 'Interdependent Web of all Existence'
- i) Pursue sustainable goals in all areas

FPUU Church Structure

December 2013

Living the Mission - Our Church Structure

