

# ***UU Church of Pittsfield Strategic Planning Visioning Process***



***At the UU Church of Pittsfield***  
***Sunday, April 10, 2011 9:45 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.***  
***Sunday, May 1, 2011 9:45 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.***

***Final Report***  
***By***  
***Gerry Robinson, President***

***Coming Together ~ Targeting Success!***

## Introduction

### ***Purpose and Goals:***

It was determined by the Executive Committee and validated by congregational conversations to have a visioning process during the 2010 Unitarian Universalist (UU) Church of Pittsfield operational year. The initiative was driven in part by need to re-covenant the Religious Education program. It was also undertaken to address the desire to revitalize and grow the size of the congregation following a decline in membership and attendance. The Church had last carried out such a project six years earlier in 2005. That process resulted in the following statement, which is read at the opening of each UU Church of Pittsfield Sunday service.

***We are a diverse congregation and aspire to be a force for good in the wider world. We are a safe, loving community that encourages and respects intellectual, spiritual, and ideological growth and exploration***

The statement is based on and seems consistent with the established “Mission Statement” of the church.

***As Unitarian Universalists, we seek to provide a supportive community for spiritual and intellectual exploration where acceptance and love empower us to develop ethical values and to act on our beliefs.***

While both statements eloquently describe the spiritual and social responsibility commitments of the congregation and its commitment to the UUA Covenant; they are too broad to provide guidance to a plan of action. The Executive Committee was looking for new and bold ideas to re-energize the church and to engage the congregation and hopefully new congregants in a vital church community beyond Sunday service and social hour. It wanted an action agenda for UU religious education, spiritual exploration and social responsibility that refocused the church community on the “Mission Statement”. An agenda of activities that would attract new young families and awaken existing members out of what some saw as lethargy.

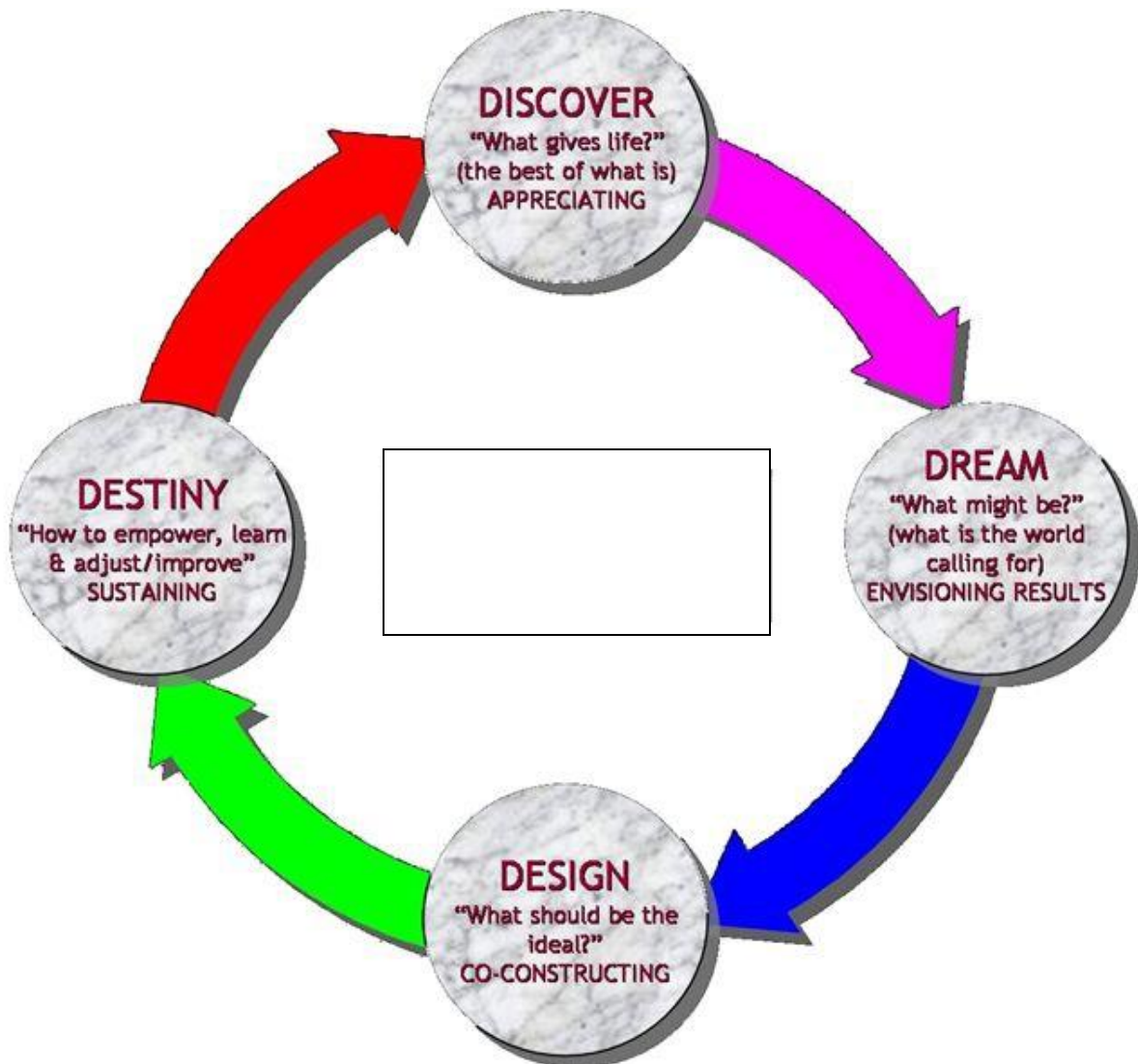
After the research of Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) online visioning and re-covenanting resources the President recommended and the Executive Committee approved the use of a strategic planning process known as Appreciative Inquiry (AI). The methodology of the process seemed to embrace a broad and constructive participatory engagement of inquiry and analysis of our Church community. It also provided a guiding theory and set of collective action exercises and tools designed to successfully evolve the vision and will of our community within the limited amount of time and access we estimated that was available to us. A high level diagram of the AI process follows under Exhibit #1 and an overview and summary of the AI program is contained in Appendix #1.

The process was carried out over two Sundays with 4 hours of work scheduled for each Sunday (see **Schedule of the UU Church Visioning Sessions** on pg.5). The first part of Discover was completed on day 1 and the rest of the Discover exercise as well as those for the Dream and Design phases completed on day 2.

The Discover phase supported by graphic posters identify many of the things in our church that people value, draw energy from and want to preserve and carry forward. They were the foundation for the Dream phase which employed exercises to think creatively about visions of what our church might look and feel like 5 years from now with new approaches that value the core values that the congregation cares most about. The final out put for the dream phase was aspiration statements in the format of newspaper headlines and stories depicting the vision of the group producing them. The Design phase then built on the Dream aspiration statements (Headlines) by creating “Destinational Targets” (what do we want to see done?) identifying and a case for action (why do we think it needs to be done?) for each “Aspirational Statement”. The exercise ends with documentation for a action plan to realize the aspiration or dream project. The Design groups outputs further identify by When, by Whom, and Resources Needed.

The amount of work within the designated time available coupled with the addition of new people for the Day 2 session made facilitation and completion of some of the exercises uneven. However if you read this Final Report carefully you will discover the enormous amount of work, energy and yes, love that over 40 members of our congregation gave and shared for eight hours of their limited time. The busy and enthusiastic chatter all over the first floor of the church on day 1 was truly inspirational. The teamwork on day 2 was phenomenal and the shared lunches together and community building that took place as we all shared stories of the hard work were heartwarming. Best of all, the richness and creativity contained in the aspiration statements and destination targets carefully considered by so many people surely demands action and a level of effort commensurate with that provided by them. Not just the Officers and committees of the church, but the whole community should rise to this occasion of making our church a spiritual, moral and transformational place for old members and a compelling place for new membership.

Finally the Destiny phase of the AI Process by prior agreement is to be taken over and guided to completion or resolution by the Executive Committee and the effected Standing Committees of the UU Church of Pittsfield beginning in the 2011/2012 operational year. We will begin with the August Executive Committee Retreat and assign leadership to the visionary and strategic plans. The rest is up to all of us. Enjoy reading!



**Discovery:** The best of the past and present, success, what works, and our images of the future

**Dream:** What is our highest purpose – vision? What are our most vivid images of the future? What do we want more of?

**Design:** What will make our dreams come alive? What is our strategy, our plan to get there?

**Destiny:** What are the individual and collective actions to best move us forward? What are our commitments?

**(Exhibit #1)**

<b>Day 1 – April 10<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Time &amp; Place</b>
<b>Registration</b>	8:30 – 9:00 (Entrance Hallway)
<b>Welcome</b> Gerry Robinson, Process Facilitator  <b>Overview of our Two Days Together and an Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry</b>	10:00 – 10:35 (Sanctuary)
<b>Discovery</b> ( <i>Discovering the Positive Core</i> ) ☺ <b>One with One Interview</b> (Activity #1)  ☺ <b>Reporting the Positive Core</b> (Activity #2)	10:40 – 11:25 (Breakout Spaces) 11:30 – 12:15 (Breakout Spaces)
<b>Lunch</b>	12:30 – 1:30 Social Hall
☺ <b>Creating Positive Core Posters</b> (Activity #3)  ☺ <b>Target Identification</b> (Activity #4)	1:40 – 2:10 (Breakout Spaces) 2:15 – 2:30 (Breakout Spaces)
<b>Day 2 - May 1st</b>	<b>Time</b>
<b>Welcome and Overview</b> Gerry Robinson	10:00 – 10:15 (Sanctuary)
<b>Dream</b> ( <i>Aspiring to Targets!</i> ) ☺ <b>Bold to Real Aspirations: Images to be carried into our Preferred Future</b> (Activity #5)  ☺ <b>Aspiration Statements &amp; Stories</b> (Activity #6)	10:15 – 11:00 (Breakout Spaces)  11:00 – 12:30
<b>Lunch</b>	12:30 – 1:00 Social Hall
<b>Design</b> ( <i>Our Plans &amp; Strategies</i> ) ☺ <b>Destination Targets</b> (Activity #7) - Group Discussion  - Presentation to large group	1:00 – 2:00 (Breakout Spaces) 2:00 - 2:30 (Sanctuary)

**(Exhibit #2)**

**Participants from Day 1 Session:**

<b>LARGE GROUP 1</b>	
1-A	1-B
Sheila McKenna Paula Robinson John Villinski Anna Pollock	Peg Smith Ron Giancola Sue Langman Donna Piaggi Anahid Ashvaria
<b>LARGE GROUP 2</b>	
2-A	2-B
Robyn Bagley Gordon Dunham Carole Ireland Allan Boschen Michael Walls Eddie O'Toole Angelique Walls Gerry Robinson	Jennifer Coppola Kellie O'Toole John Mayer Ardis Nardone Eric Janet Cook
<b>LARGE GROUP 3</b>	
3-A	3-B
Bob Shepherd Nancy Dolbeare Darlene Baisley Bob Smith Bonnie Smith Terrill Ploss Kate Baisley	Dan Cook Linda Giancola Doris Albrecht Ellen Gillespie Cameron Allhouse Bruce Henry

**(Exhibit#3)**

**NOTE:** There were additional new participants at the Day 2 sessions, but the groups facilitators did not pass in attendance sheets so exact names are not possible to identify from the meeting documents. If there were new people at the Day2 Session who wish to have their names added to the Participant List, I would be pleased to add them.

## Discover

### ***Summary of the Discover Process:***

The basic theory of the Discover Phase of the AI process was to discover the best of the past and present of people's UU church experiences. What works and what are considered successes. Three large groups were arbitrarily determined by where people were sitting. There was one exception. Since we wanted one large group in later exercises to focus specifically on RE issues; people with strong interests in RE were allowed to move to that group. Each of the large groups were subdivided into two small groups for a total of six small groups. The large groups were identified as 1, 2 and 3. the small groups in each were identified as A or B as 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B and so forth. See list of Day 1 participants on table on page 5. The small groups each participated in four exercise activities supported by handbooks and facilitators over the 4 hours devoted to the day 1 schedule.

### **One on one Interview (Activity #1)**

The small groups paired off as one-on-one partners and spent twenty minutes each interviewing each other with the first four questions of a pre-developed interview guide for each participant. The questions were:

- 1. By way of introduction, please share with me your name and one interesting piece of information regarding your name (why you were given that name, what it means in another language, etc.)***
- 2. To start, I would like to learn more about how you came to be here – in Pittsfield, a part of the UU Church of Pittsfield. Tell me your story.***
- 3. What attracted you to UU? What has kept you here?***
- 4. Considering the Church 's covenant based on the 7 principles of its covenant, think of a time in your experience with the UU Church of Pittsfield, either through your own eyes or those of your child that you have witnessed or seen evidence of this 'Spirit'.***

At the end of the timed interviews each participant kept their partners interview answers and notes for the start of Exercise#2.

### **Reporting the Positive Core (Activity #2)**

Each small group re-convened and each reporter spent two minutes introducing their partner to the group and shared a couple of highlights of the 4 interview question notes. As guided by the group facilitator each small group participant listened to the stories, for what common themes they heard. They listened for what seemed to underpin the high-point experiences and what energized them about what they heard. As they listened, they considered what they thought was part of the positive core of that group, the UU Church of Pittsfield and its

community. After the reports were completed each interview and notes were returned to their owners. Each small group chose one story to share with the large group (presented by the group's Reporter).

### **Creating Positive Core Posters (Activity #3)**

Based on all of the stories heard in the small group, each group identified what they thought were the assets of the UU Church of Pittsfield. They looked for the 8 or 10 things that they felt were the very best (the positive core) about the people in the group and the UU Church of Pittsfield. They tried to identify what strengths, best practices, values, capabilities, etc. did they want to keep, even as things might change in the future. They reduced their discussions to one **Positive Core poster** and posted it in the Sanctuary to share with the other planning participants and to be ready to complete Exercise #4.

### **Target Identification (Activity #4)**

All the small groups and planning participants walk around the Sanctuary and visited all of the posters on Targeting Success. They were issued eight adhesive backed "Bulls-eyes" (dots) each. They affixed as many as they chose to put on the ideas, themes, etc. that gave them the most energy; and which they felt were the most important when they thought about the UU Church of Pittsfield. This was NOT about voting, or eliminating anything. It was about getting a sense of where there was high energy. There was sufficient confusion about how the dots were to be used and the values they portrayed that they were not used to order the positive cores. Instead all identified positive cores were considered equally as areas of high energy on which to build visioning for the future.

Below is the small group Discovery Poster Values sorted by group and by RE, Transformational and Social Action clusters. They represent the enduring value building blocks that the Dream and Design phases and exercises upon which Day 2 activities were based.

# Discovery Poster Values Clusters

By

## Small Group Discussion

### *Inside of the Walls/Transformational*

#### Religious

- We embrace UUism for its liberal spiritual exploration (\*1A)
- UUism is not an easy unambiguous path...we choose it!  
(Questions more important than answers) (1A)
- Open minded approach to religion (1B)
- Avenues for exploration and growth of spirituality (1B)
- A door for spiritual growth (3A)

#### Cultural

- Energy and vitality (1B)
- Open mindedness; freedom of thought; quiet; diversity (2A)
- Embracing diverse points of view (2B)
- Open ongoing search for truth (2B)
- We provide a safe place to search freely (3A)
- Intellectual growth and exploration (3B)

#### Community

- Our church has a beautiful, peaceful, spiritual house (1A)
- A community offering friendship and support (1B)
- An Oasis (2A)
- Flexible; comfortable, safe; supportive environment (2B)

- **Acceptance (2B)**
- **We are a caring and supportive family (3A)**
- **Tolerant Community (3B)**

### ***Outside of the Walls/Social Action***

- **Track record of hosting and sponsoring a variety of progressive movements (1A)**
- **Opportunities to express UU values through action (1B)**
- **Activism (2A)**
- **Political activism (2B)**
- **Out in the Community (2B)**
- **Larger Community uses of the church building (2B)**
- **Liberal and diverse congregation in which social activism is encouraged and practiced (3A)**

### ***Religious Education***

- **Parents receive support and religious education for their children (1B)**
- **Children learn and live UU principles through religious education (1B)**
- **UU identity for children (2A)**

**(Exhibit #4)**

## Dream (Visioning)

### **Summary of the Dream Process:**

The purpose of the To imagine a future the participants wanted to work toward – a future where the UU Church of Pittsfield is full of spirit and even more successful. The clusters of positive core (enduring) values broke into three clusters without difficulty:

- Religious Education...Group 1
- Social Responsibility/Action (activities outside the walls of the church)...Group2
- Spiritual Transformation (activities inside the walls of the church)...Group 3

In the interest of time and to ensure that all cluster values received appropriate consideration and focused thinking we assigned each large group (1, 2 and 3) to a specific cluster. When the clusters were assigned to groups, participants were allowed to join whichever group held the most personal interest and attention for them. We also had fewer facilitators and several new participants to Day 2 so continuity was a challenge.

### **Bold to Real Aspirations: Images to be carried into our Preferred Future (Activity #5)**

To begin, all groups were asked to review all of the positive core posters, now posted in the Social Hall and to study the Discover Value clusters which each participant was provided with. Next, the large groups were asked to meet in breakout rooms and share the images, sounds and emotions they had in their minds when viewing the summarized Positive Core work from Day 1 They were then given an hour as a group to try to reach consensus on three to five positive cores for the cluster assigned to each group. This was an attempt to give new participants, those shifting groups and facilitators to get on the same page before beginning the Dream and Design exercises. Each group had a Facilitator, a Scribe, a Timekeeper and a Reporter.

### **Aspiration Statements & Stories (Activity #6)**

The Facilitators began this session's discussion by asking individuals to share their aspirations and dreams based on their responses to questions 5 & 6 from the earlier interviews (Activity #1):

- 5. *It is the year, 2016, five years have passed, and your dreams for Targeting Success in Religious Education, Transformational Services and Social Action are realized. What is now happening? What do you see going on at the UU Church of Pittsfield? What is different?***
- 6. *Given the UU Church of Pittsfield's mission statement If you were given three wishes to improve the health and vitality of the church in your group's key clusters of discovery, what would they be?***

The handbook instructions urged the facilitators to suggest Imagining that it is the year 2015. Imagine that during the years 2011 to 2015, you and the others in this room and those they can influence have really made a difference! There are many of examples of a successful UU Church of Pittsfield. What strategies are the UU Church of Pittsfield's community engaged in? What are the results we are experiencing? After everyone had an opportunity to share the groups began to weave the threads of individual aspirations into a collective headline statement, much like the New York Times or USA TODAY front page headline of 10 words or less. With the headline in place the groups were to write the story, including as much description as possible in detailing what has happened in order to make their headline a reality. After the group reviewed their work to make sure that the discovered Positive Core was evident, the Recorder captured this work on newsprint as the group worked on the aspiration statement. Once agreement was reached, it was transferred to a laptop template. The Reporter from each group presented their Headline/Aspiration Statement and article to the plenary group. At this point some groups had difficulty finishing the Headline statements on time but all groups turned in substantial work from the Exercise #5 and #6.

## **Aspiration Statement**

### **Group 1**

**Headline Statement**(10 words or less) :

RE Rocks!!!

**Storyline**(including as much description as possible):

Which came first the chicken or the egg?

In the UU community garden young members of the church's RE group harvest eggs to help feed the homeless and provide abundant sources of protein for these community members. A Saturday morning might feature youth and older church members side by side as one feeds and the other gathers eggs from the chicken coop. Other church members pick the ripe tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, lettuces, peppers and egg plant to deliver to the food pantries all over the community. As one chicken watches from her perch atop the chicken coop young people laugh as they chase the chicks out of the garden and back towards the chicken yard. This group provides 500 eggs and 10 bushels of fresh vegetables each week to the neediest in our community.

See you at the interfaith Block Party

Wendell Avenue Rocked as the congregations of the Anshe Anunim Temple and Unitarian Universalist church brought food and music to their neighbors and friends on Wendell Avenue while the Rabbi and UU minister had a bake off of their most delicious desserts, the teens of both congregations provided the music and dancing. Neighbors brought chairs onto their lawns and both congregations were open for bathrooms and laughter was heard in the air. Rabbi Josh said "Quite frankly my cookies were the best! But Reverend Jane's pecan pie put a smile on my face!" Neighbors said they looked forward to next years block party!

UU, Muslim, Christian, and Jewish youth hold youth forum at camp.

Teens met at Ferry Beach to swim, have bon fires and talk about their religious ideas. As they munched on corn on the cob by the fire light, they talked freely about how their lives were shaped by their religious culture and the similarities in many of their values. Deep discussions lasted long into the night. "I never thought that I could be friends with someone so different, but then guess what we aren't so different.". This program was started by the youth group of UU church of Pittsfield.

- 1. A large number of new and renewed engaged committed families participate regularly.**
- 2. RE offers flexible times to better support contemporary family life styles and needs. (EX: after school program, mentoring, tutoring, arts, and active activities)**
- 3. RE is interwoven into the life of the church community.**
- 4. The curriculum is multi-cultural, experiential, contemporary, diverse, flexible, integrated, connected to other UU communities, teaches UU principles and FUN.**

## **Aspiration Statement**

Group 2

**Headline Statement**(10 words or less) :

**Storyline**(including as much description as possible):

# 5

More  
Singing, kids, spiritual,  
Environmental issues, survival,  
Intergenerational social activities  
Commitment to social justice  
Permanent minister  
Local community outreach  
Hub of social action  
Powerful sense of what/who we are which transforms with outside work (identity)  
More congregation interaction  
Public awareness of us

# 6

Permanent minister  
More money  
More involved, active members who make us known in the wider community and provide us with the service we need,  
Music

### **Aspiration Statement #1**

#### **Group 3**

**Headline Statement**(10 words or less) :

**UU CHURCH GOES "OFF THE GRID" WITH GREEN POWER**

**Storyline**(including as much description as possible):

During the upcoming summer the Unitarian Universalist Church of Pittsfield (UUCP) will be installing equipment which will take it "off the grid" by supplying all of the church's electrical needs with on-site solar/wind power. The UUCP is known in its denomination as a "Green Sanctuary Congregation". To get this title the congregation, in 2006, approved and sponsored several initiatives such as electronics recycling, replacing all light bulbs, and carpooling (among others). These actions have all been guided by the Green Sanctuary Committee (GSC) which formed as the first required step in the process to gain the designation. Earlier this year at its annual meeting the GSC submitted the proposed installation on church property along with plans for financing the installation. The plan was approved. Votes of this type are an important part of the church, which holds respect for the planet and for the democratic process as 2 of its 7 guiding principles.

## **Aspiration Statement #2**

**Headline Statement**(10 words or less) :

**Majority of Pittsfield residents are members of the UU Church.  
Church breaks ground on new building.**

**Storyline**(including as much description as possible):

A study completed last month on the religious affiliations left many shocked, as it showed that the majority of residents are not Christian, as past studies have shown, but Unitarian Universalists. This religion focuses on tolerance, a sense of community, and love. The UU Church of Pittsfield has started construction on a new “Green” building. The congregation has become more and more successful with their mission, using community dinners, soup kitchens and various other charities. They have also become a leader in solar energy, not only in the city, but in Massachusetts as a whole. The church was recently honored by and attended a meeting at the UN for its activities to identify “ways to increase peace.”

## **Aspiration Statement #3**

**Headline Statement**(10 words or less) :

**UU Church of Pittsfield breaks ground for new building**

**Storyline**(including as much description as possible):

As a result of its phenomenal growth, the Pittsfield UU church is constructing a new building in keeping with the philosophy which spurred its growth, this will be a “green” building incorporating solar, wind and other technologies, allowing the church to be energy self sufficient.

Given its dedication to social action, the new building has flexible architecture, allowing for the multiple uses, including community dinners, lecture series, workshops and social programs the church has become known for.

## **Aspiration Statement #4**

**Headline Statement**(10 words or less) :

**UUC group returns from Africa**

**Storyline**(including as much description as possible):

Three members of the UUC have just returned from spending three weeks in (---) Africa where they worked with the (e.g. African Lakes Initiative; Habitat for Humanity International). Their expenses were underwritten by the church and by grants from ---. During their stay in Africa each participant lived with a local family. They participated in building a school in the village of ---, spent time with local school children to help them improve their English, ---.

The group will make a presentation about their experiences at the UUC on ---/ They are also willing to speak to other groups who may be interested in learning about their travel.

## **Design**

### ***Summary of the Design Process:***

The purpose of the Design Phase of AI is, after having discovered the strengths and beauty that lie within our Church and imagining a preferred future, it was now time to begin to lay the foundational plan for this to be realized.

### **Designing Destination Targets**

From the Headlines/Aspiration Statements that were presented, the groups were instructed to choose one the ones of interest to them and that they would like to work on. Given the sharing, the groups then needed to decide which **Destination Targets (DT)** that the group wanted to address. The groups were to propose what they considered to be the key information and actions needed to begin work on the DT. Then they were to complete the **Destinational Targets** form (computer template to be filled in by the group's recorder). The group Reporters then delivered the report to the large group in the Sanctuary. Again some groups did not complete work on all the DT's that they wanted to address. Some of it is incomplete information on the when, by whom and resources needed on the forms. Despite this incomplete work; as the Executive Committee and Standing UUC Committees have the option of going back to the Aspiration Statements of each group and review the visions for which there were no DT's completed. This material has the considered thinking of many members of the church as is a much more substantial starting place for action plans than would otherwise have been the case without the planning materials. This guidance will be invaluable for the Church officers and committees as they plan their agenda's for the coming UUC operational year and years beyond. It ia not a one year plan it is a creative five year vision of what might be and a firm place to begin.

### ***Destination Targets by Group***

#### **Group #1-Religious Education**

##### **1. Destinational Target (*What do we want to see done?*):**

## **25 FAMILIES MAKE UP RE PROGRAM**

**Case for Action (*Why do we think it needs to be done?*):**

RE IS NECESSARY FOR A HEALTHY AND GROWING CHURCH

**Action Plan (*What specific steps/action needs to be done to accomplish the project? What am I willing to contribute?*):**

1.

(By When, by Whom, Resources Needed?)

--CHURCH OPEN HOUSES—

-RE, membership&social functions committees, ministerial presence.

- Advertising money

2.

(By When, by Whom, Resources Needed?)

--ADVERTISING CHURCH AND RE IN FOYER, FACEBOOK, UPDATE WEBSITE, COMMUNITY, BULLETIN BOARDS

-advertising/PR coordinator (Sheila M. ?), membership committee—

-

3.

(By When, by Whom, Resources Needed?)

--MINISTERIAL PRESENCE-

-increase use of current minister, or hire a minister

4.

(By When, by Whom, Resources Needed?)

--BRING A FRIEND SUNDAY

-all, membership committee

**2. Destinal Target (*What do we want to see done?*):**

-RE OFFERED 24/7

**Case for Action (*Why do we think it needs to be done?*):**

TO BETTER SUPPORT CONTEMPORARY FAMILY LIFESTYLES AND NEEDS

**Action Plan (*What specific steps/action needs to be done to accomplish the project? What am I willing to contribute?*):**

1.  
(By When, by Whom, Resources Needed?)  
-explore and implement flexible times (RE committee with current parents)
  
2.  
(By When, by Whom, Resources Needed?)  
--add RE info to website (RE committee and webmaster)
  
3.  
(By When, by Whom, Resources Needed?)  
RE message is multimedia (website, mail, email, cd) (RE committee and webmaster)
  
4.  
(By When, by Whom, Resources Needed?)  
--afterschool programs , tutoring, mentoring, programs (RE committee, parents, volunteers)

**3. Destinal Target (*What do we want to see done?*):**

RE is interwoven into the life of the community

**Case for Action (*Why do we think it needs to be done?*):**

Parents and children must be involved in the totality of the UU experience

**Action Plan (*What specific steps/action needs to be done to accomplish the project? What am I willing to contribute?*):**

1.  
(By When, by Whom, Resources Needed?)  
  
Mentors-congregation(long or short term)  
Expand RE teaching staff(short term or rotating basis): parents, volunteers
  
2.  
(By When, by Whom, Resources Needed?)  
-build programs that could include children in a meaningful way (program planners, social action, church cleanups, green sanctuary)
  
3.  
(By When, by Whom, Resources Needed?)  
--INTERGENERATIONAL “FUN” ACTIVITIES (ALL with gusto—RE, green sanctuary, social activities)

**4. Destinal Target (*What do we want to see done?*):**

THE CURRICULUM IS MULTICULTURAL, EXPERIENTIAL, CONTEMPORARY,  
DIVERSE, FLEXIBLE, CONNECTED TO OTHER UU'S AND FUN

**Case for Action (*Why do we think it needs to be done?*):**

To engage children, parents and congregation

**Action Plan (*What specific steps/action needs to be done to accomplish the project? What am I willing to contribute?*):**

1.

(By When, by Whom, Resources Needed?)

-develop adult ecology course (green sanctuary)

2.

(By When, by Whom, Resources Needed?)

-contact local RE programs to explore future programs (RE committee)

**Group 2 Spiritual/Transitional**

DT #1

What: New Minister

Why: Pastoral Care (glue that brings things together)

Administrative functions

Connections to UUA and other churches, religious organizations, and  
community organizations

Sunday services – some

How: Raise funds for minister's salary

Arrive at consensus within the congregation re: needs from minister

Search committee appointed by President

Interview Candidates

Make recommendations

Candidates give services

Congregation votes on Minister

DT #2

What: More Money

Why: Minister

- Building upkeep
- Advertising

How: Get known in larger community (membership committee)

- Advertise social justice trips, community gardens and outreach programs in newspaper
- Draw in new people
- Social Networking
- Build up RE programming/new curriculum
  - Media Coverage
  - Newspaper
  - Local TV
  - Radio
- Connect w/other UU Congregations
  - Study Success
  - Network
  - Partner for programs and initiatives
  - Fund Raisers/ASK FOR MONEY

DT #3

What: Current Member Involvement and Increase Number of Members

Why: Eliminate burnout in current members who are overloaded  
Increase ideas, energy, diversity  
More money  
Greater meaning and impact

How: Bring Our Passions Here

- Community Gardens
- Trips/Travel/Service
- Ask the question: What would it take to get YOU into the building?
- Sharing our gifts services
- Determine what shared passions exist
  - Public speaking
  - Dog training
  - Music
  - Writing
  - Photography

Social Hall

- Membership – board with pictures and names of new members
- Meet & Greet people – orientation, “blue mug duty”
- Sharing/Caring
- Community/Social Committee
- Analysis of what satisfies needs of members
- Pledge to bring in visitors’

### **Group #3 Social Responsibility/Action**

**# 1 Destination Target (*What do we want to see done?*):**

Recognition in the wider community for its extensive Social Action activities.

**Case for Action (*Why do we think it needs to be done?*):**

To really be a “Force for good in the wider community.”

**Action Plan (*What specific steps/action needs to be done to accomplish the project? What am I willing to contribute?*):**

1.  
(By When, by Whom, Resources Needed?)

T-Shirts: Unitarian Universalist Church of Pittsfield and chalice.

By July 1, 2011

2.  
(By When, by Whom, Resources Needed?)

. Explore new options for Social Action and to motivate more members of the UUC to become involved in Social Action activities.

3.  
(By When, by Whom, Resources Needed?)

## Assess effectiveness of Social Action activities

### # 2 Destination Target (*What do we want to see done?*):

Greening of the building.

### Case for Action (*Why do we think it needs to be done?*):

Concern about Climate Change, to be an example in the community and for economic reasons.

### Action Plan (*What specific steps/action needs to be done to accomplish the project? What am I willing to contribute?*):

1.  
(By When, by Whom, Resources Needed?)

Feasibility study of solar and or wind; Within FY 2012;  
Committee/consultant

2.  
(By When, by Whom, Resources Needed?)

Motivate congregation and neighborhood; FY 2013

3.  
(By When, by Whom, Resources Needed?)

Capital Campaign and grant applications; Committee; FY 2014

4.  
(By When, by Whom, Resources Needed?)

### Publicity

5.  
(By When, by Whom, Resources Needed?)

Install system; 2014-2016

5.  
(By When, by Whom, Resources Needed?)

Dedication of System; 2016

## **APPENDIX 1**

# Appreciative Inquiry (AI) OVERVIEW

AI has been described in many ways. Here is a practitioner-oriented definition:

**Appreciative Inquiry** (AI) is the cooperative co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves the discovery of what gives "life" to a living system when it is most effective, alive and constructively capable in economic, ecological and human terms. AI involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend, anticipate and heighten positive potential. The inquiry is mobilized through the crafting of the "unconditional positive question", often involving hundreds or thousands of people. The AI intervention focuses on the speed of imagination and innovation; instead of the negative, critical and spiraling diagnoses commonly used in organizations. The **discovery, dream, design, and destiny** model links the energy of the positive core to changes never thought possible.

AI is based upon the simple assumption that every organization has something that works well, and by using this as a starting point positive change can be created. Allowing people to participate in dialogues and share stories about their past and present achievements, assets, unexplored potentials, innovations, strengths, elevated thoughts, opportunities, benchmarks, high point moments, lived values, traditions, core and distinctive competencies, expressions of wisdom, insights into the deeper corporate spirit and soul, and visions of valued and possible futures is the heart of AI. From those dialogues, a "positive change core" can be identified. From this, AI links the energy of the positive core directly to any change agenda. This creates energy, excitement and a desire to move towards a shared dream. AI, an approach to organizational analysis and learning, is uniquely intended for discovering, understanding, and fostering innovations in social organizational arrangements and processes. In this context, AI refers to two things:

- A search for knowledge.
- A theory of collective action designed to evolve the vision and will of a group, organization or society as a whole.

Source: Cooperrider, D., Whitney, D., and Stavros, J., (2003). *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook: The First in a Series of AI Workbooks for Leaders of Change*, p.3.

# APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY PRINCIPLES

**What we choose to study makes a difference.**

- ✦ Organizations are an endless source of study and learning.
- ✦ Carefully choose what we will study; that will create our world.

**Positive change occurs when the process of change models the future.**

- ✦ Gandhi said, "Be the change you wish to see in the world".
- ✦ To make a change in a system it helps to model the change ourselves.

**Positive questions lead to positive change!**

- ✦ The momentum for large-scale change requires positive energy and social effort:  
positive questions  
release that energy.
- ✦ What we ask about actually determines what we bring about.

**Wholeness brings out the best. Gathering stakeholders together stimulates creativity and builds collective capacity.**

- ✦ Wholeness brings out the best in people and in organizations.

**The moment we ask a question, change begins.**

- ✦ Inquiry itself is an intervention and it creates change.
- ✦ The questions we ask drive what we find and how we change, so what we ask about determines the direction of the change.

**We move toward our images of the future.**

- ✦ The more positive and hopeful the images, the more positive the present-day action.
- ✦ The more clear the images the greater their power to attract.

**Diversity creates more robust imagining.**

- ✦ We have unique points of view; we see the world through different lenses.
- ✦ Difference gives us more perspectives and creates robust results.

**We grow toward that which gives us energy**

- ✦ Like plants that grow toward the sun (their source of energy), we grow toward the things that give us energy.
- ✦ Freedom to choose lets all of us maximize our energy.

**Words create our world.**

- ✦ Reality is subjective, and socially created through our language.
- ✦ The more positive and hopeful the language, the more positive our current actions.
- ✦ What we talk about becomes the focus of our energy.

**Free choice liberates individuals.**

- ✦ People perform better and are more committed when they have freedom to choose how and what they contribute.
- ✦ Choice releases energy and stimulates excellence.

**Relationships support our most creative work.**

- ✦ Humans are social beings and innovation is encouraged by connection.
- ✦ Connection with others fuels our own creativity.

## **APPENDIX 2**

## Strategic Planning Committee

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