

UUCSS Three-Year Rolling Strategic Plan

July 2019 to June 2022

Introduction

This is the first 3-year rolling strategic plan of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring. It is an articulation of our goals for the next three church years (starting in July 2019), the actions we will take toward achieving those goals, and the measurable outcomes and other indicators we will use to evaluate our progress.

For a strategic plan like this to be successful, it must reflect where the congregation's energy is focused. So, the process for the formation of this plan intentionally drew on a number of sources of input. This community has engaged in intentional strategic planning for some time, most recently adopting our second 5-year strategic plan in 2012. The themes and goals in that plan resonate with many of the themes and goals in this strategic plan.

More proximate sources for this strategic plan come from four types of input:

- The wealth of information gathered by the Search committee from the congregation about what we are called to and our vision for ourselves and our future.
- Detailed input from the Programs and Operations committees and the Board about their short-term and long-term goals and actions they intend to take toward those goals.
- The congregational World Café workshop.
- Two coffee hour open meetings for feedback on the draft matrices of goals and actions.

This plan synthesizes goals and actions drawn from these sources. Importantly, it also identifies the entities within the church responsible for implementing the actions. These actions, particularly for the first year of the plan, are intended to be specific and measurable. In looking at the various goals and actions, five different themes were apparent:

- Communication, Connection, and Caring
- Organizational Improvements
- Stewardship of Our Physical Property
- Expansion and Revitalization of Programs
- Engaging with the Larger Community and Issues of Justice

The purpose of this plan is to provide sufficient specificity regarding our goals and the actions we will take to allow for an evaluation of whether we achieve what we propose. The details of *how* the actions will be implemented are left to the group or committee involved. Of necessity, a strategic plan provides a broad view, omitting the particulars. Various entities in the church provided rich detail on their plans, which will be an invaluable resource for planning, implementing, and evaluating the various specific actions. Those submissions are incorporated in the appendix to this plan.

We are committed to keeping our strategic plan a living document. During the first year covered by this strategic plan, the Strategic Planning Task Force will seek data and qualitative input, including getting progress reports and a reassessment of goals from each committee, to assess the implementation of this plan. Along with outcomes, process is important, so the Strategic Planning Task Force will seek input on the congregation's goals and then prepare a new rolling 3-year strategic plan: Year Two becomes the new Year One, Year Three becomes the new Year Two, and a new Year Three is added. The successes and failures from each Year One will be assessed and goals and tasks we projected for Year Two or Year Three will be rolled over into the new Year One, maintained as goals and tasks for the new Year Two or Three, or dropped entirely, as appropriate.

Through this annual evaluation and planning process, we will set priorities, focus our energy and resources, and seek to strengthen and better coordinate our actions. We recognize that our goals and planned actions will likely change as things unfold. By reassessing and articulating a new 3-year plan each year, we will focus on near-term, achievable actions toward our goals, while still engaging in long-term planning (Year Two) and maintaining a longer-term vision (Year Three).

Theme 1: Communication, Connection, and Caring

Communication, connection, and caring emerged strongly as priorities at all levels of feedback, and throughout the feedback process. Substantial steps are currently being taken to improve in these areas, for example, the "Big Book" online platform being created to share information about organizations and activities at UUCSS; planning for a summit to facilitate coordination between our various social justice groups; and strengthening our lay ministry program.

● Communication				
Goal	Year 1 – July 2019 to June 2020.	Who	Year 2 – July 2020 to June 2021.	Year 3 – July 2021 to June 2022
-Improve communications generally through systems improvements and software/hardware upgrades -Integrate our communication platforms to ensure the best possible information dissemination (events, services, opportunities, support, etc.)	Make the “Big Book” online platform (information about organizations and activities of UUCSS) available to the congregation	"Clarity" group established during 2018 Leadership Retreat	Evaluate and update the Big Book	
	Analyze our communication needs, including channels between congregation and leadership and evaluate current platforms in light of our needs	Program Council, IT Committee, and staff	Design communication system that coordinates our platforms	Implement the new communications system
	Provide regular reporting to congregation about the status of key initiatives, including reports of “no progress”	Capital Improvements committee, Strategic Planning Task Force, Search committee, Board		

	Improve function of WiFi and phone services	IT Committee	Replace computer resources as needed	
	Integrate new system for calendar and events		Upgrade shared folder system	
			Recruit additional volunteers	
• Connection				
Improve connections between the different ages, races, and religious beliefs	Enumerate existing events and channels that foster community spirit and connection	Program Council		Establish an entity to offer events to foster community connection (e.g. Fellowship Committee)
	Explore interest and energy for additional events such as Volunteer appreciation lunch or dinner; Family dinner night; Wine Down Friday Night			
Improve connections between our social justice groups	Hold a summit to build relationships and to explore common goals between Social Justice groups	Green Sanctuary; Racial Justice Task Force; Defending Democracy; Rainbow Alliance	Identify intersectional goals	Energize and mobilize congregation around said goal
			Commit to a time-limited common project	
Improve connections by welcoming and connecting new members to the congregation	Host an annual brunch for new and prospective members	Membership	Update the photo directory	Develop a membership bridge program for YRUU graduates

	Work with Sunday Support to formalize the touch points from 1st time visitor to prospective member		Establish a “mentor” program for new members	Develop an enrollment “campaign” for long-standing Friends to become Members
• Caring				
Learn how to deal better with conflict	Make skills around dealing with conflict a focus of the 2019 Leadership Retreat	Board Planning Committee	Board establish or designate team to investigate systems and internal entities to deal with conflict	Implement findings
Offer support to individuals and to groups within the congregation as need arises	Recruit additional members of Lay Ministry team with eye toward creating a diversified team	Minister and Lay Ministers	Develop a way to determine if Caring Coordinator’s requests for assistance are being met	Evaluate how well Caring Coordinator’s requests for assistance are being met and, if necessary, develop a plan to address issues identified by the evaluation
	Improve communication regarding availability of services, including updating brochure			
			Connect to what is expressed in joys and sorrows	

THEME 2: Organizational improvement

Over the past two years, the Board has devoted time exploring how our organizational structure and culture are serving us and areas for improvement.

As a result, a couple of amendments were made to the Constitution to change the way certain leadership positions are filled on the Board of Trustees, and to bring parity and comparable governance structures to Program and Operations Councils. The Board also began to explore the possibility of hiring additional staff in order to alleviate strain on our Minister and to try to address potential burnout of our volunteers.

The goal is to continue examining our governance structure and improving our infrastructure by establishing a framework for evaluating our programs and creating a more effective system for how we communicate about and make decisions within the Board, our Councils, and our committees.

Goal	Year 1 – June 2019 to July 2020	Who	Year 2 – June 2020 to July 2021	Year 3 – June 2021 to July 2022
Provide support for meaningful, transformative, and emotionally effective worship services	Develop and implement a process for Worship Committee to provide to the Minister effective input before, logistical support during, and feedback after services	Worship and Minister	Evaluate process for input, support, and feedback and impact it has on services	
	Develop objectives and procedures for scheduling and reviewing services by Members and visiting speakers (especially during the summer).		Evaluate reviews of services by Members and visiting speakers and, if needed, make revisions to procedures for scheduling and preparing such services.	
		Worship and Minister	Develop liaisons with other groups within the church, including	

			youth and young adults, to broaden participation in services.	
	Identify and implement ways to communicate with, connect to, and care for our minister	Minister, Transition Team, and Congregation		
	Develop shared understanding of minister's role and strengths and congregation's role			
Hire additional professional help, including a Congregational Administrator as soon as finances allow	Create a financial plan that includes a line item in budget to employ Congregational Administrator who assumes responsibilities for church's organizational management	Board	Develop job description and evaluation plan	Hire Congregational Administrator
Evaluate UUCSS Constitution		Board	Review David Pyle's Nov. 2017 informal Constitution assessment for possible edits to Constitution	
Conduct an overall assessment of minister and ministries	Develop framework and instruments for assessing both ministries and minister	Board	Implementation and evaluation of framework and instruments	
Recruit and sustain volunteers	Clarify responsibility & authority	Program Council & Ops Council		

	within Councils and committees to foster efficient use of volunteer resources and prevent burn-out			
	Learn about ways of recruiting and sustaining volunteers by attending workshops or classes	Program Council & Ops Council	Develop a plan for recruiting and sustaining volunteers, which could include designing a "Gifts survey" to identify talents and interests of congregants and making a plan for using data gathered, including determining means (e.g., through ABD or separate from ABD)	Deploy plan
		Program Council & Ops Council	Create system of succession for committee leadership	Implement systems
		Worship	Develop a system for membership succession within the Worship Committee.	
Revisit relationship between the two Councils, Board committees, and the Board to clarify lines of responsibility for evaluation both of needs and of	Develop process to evaluate current programs and plans	Program Council, Ops Council, Board Committees and Board (starting at the Leadership Retreat)		

on-going programs and plans	Develop process to evaluate needs / gaps			
Develop better storage procedures for historical records	Evaluate options to properly store our paper records	Administrative Operations Committee	Implement best options	
	Evaluate options to make our electronically stored records more easily available.			
Make collaboration among staff and leadership easy and efficient	Evaluate collaboration tools for staff and leadership at no cost to members.		Deploy best tools	

Theme 3: Stewardship of our physical property

It is a truism that human beings are affected by their physical surroundings. We need our physical space to function well in meeting our logistical needs, to be beautiful so as to feed our aesthetic and spiritual needs, and to be sustainable to meet our moral and fiscal commitments. In this section, we lay out specific goals and tasks that approach these three objectives through repair, maintenance, and, ultimately, upgrades. Because we understand that, along with product, process is important, there are goals that include providing updates and two-way communication between the committees and the congregation as a whole.

Goal	Year 1 – July 2019 to June 2020	Who	Year 2 – July 2020 to June 2021	Year 3 – July 2021 to June 2022
Maintain our buildings and grounds so as to provide inviting and comfortable	Establish a database to track repair needs and maintenance	Property	Evaluate use of database	

space and avoid emergency repairs	needs and schedules			
	-Repair concrete parking pad -Resurface gravel parking lot -Repair south retaining wall		-Address drainage issues -Repair steps from NH avenue	-Repair Fellowship House exterior and sheds -Improve exterior lighting
	Update gardens/ grounds list		Develop and implement prioritized grounds maintenance needs list	Develop long term grounds plan
			-Evaluate and develop a plan for grounds maintenance tasks for volunteers and tasks for professionals -Budget for outsourced tasks	Implement plan
	Develop plan for updated physical security	Property in consultation with Board and Congregation	Budget for updated physical security	Implement physical security plan
	Identify existing and potential issues for weather-proofing (water penetration and the like)	Property	Budget for weatherproofing	Implement weatherproofing

Communicate needs and activities relating to property improvements	Develop and implement means of communicating w/ congregation re: needs, activities, and plans for repairs and maintenance	Property		
Upgrading our buildings and grounds with funds raised through UUCSS's Capital Campaign with a view to aesthetics, enhanced function, and sustainability, both for internal and external (e.g. rental) uses	-Replace HVAC serving Sanctuary bldg. -Repair Sanctuary roof and damaged ceiling	Capital Improvements	Work with contractor and tenants to begin work on Community and Admin bldgs	Complete work on Community and Admin bldgs
	Determine funds remaining after Sanctuary repairs are completed			
	Determine cost of mandatory repairs to Community bldg. and Admin bldg. in order to estimate funds available for non-mandatory upgrades			
	-Present congregation with affordable options for non-mandatory upgrades -Get input from congregation and committees on preferences and priorities			

	Finalize plans and negotiate with contractor and tenants			
Improve function of Sanctuary through improved acoustics	Replace loudspeakers Apply acoustic control treatments	AV Committee		
Implement appropriate recycling as required by county law and supported by our 7 th principle	Analyze causes of inappropriate items in recycling dumpster	Green Sanctuary	Monitor	Monitor
	Educate congregation			
	Work with staff			
	Monitor			

Theme 4: Expansion and revitalization of programs

There was significant energy around expanding some of our most active and cherished programs and revitalizing programs that have taken a back seat during these last few years of transition. For example: integrating youth more deeply into the Music program; expanding lay ministry membership and training; and re-establishing adult RE.

Goal	Year 1 – July 2019 to June 2020	Who	Year 2 – July 2020 to June 2021	Year 3 – July 2021 to June 2022
Expand the Music program	Increase the number of individuals in the choir (2 basses, 2 tenors, 1 soprano)	Music Com.	Expand involvement of youth through intergenerational music performances and adding a music component to RE	Increase number of music events gradually – to have 1 per month
				Music committee membership reflects congregation

Expand the size and diversity of the lay minister program	Recruit at least 2 new Lay Ministers	Lay Ministers Minister		
	Provide training for new and continuing Lay Ministers		Evaluate the training of Lay Ministers for adequacy and appropriateness	
	Monthly meetings between Lay Ministry Team and Minister			
Enhance elements of RE program	Begin middle school youth group	RE		Develop more opportunities for middle school youth and YRUU projects and outings
	Continue the ministry of OWL		Recruit three more OWL teachers	
	Offer intergenerational worship once per month			
Reestablish regular Adult RE Programming		Program Council, RE committee, DRE	Explore how to re-establish Adult RE taking into account research on needs, interests, and tensions (e.g. consider Common read; Yoga; Meditation; UUA Courses; Facilitated discussions, Comparative religion workshops) -Explore tension between spiritual vs religious vs atheist)	Begin to reestablish Adult RE by launching one or two classes / events
			Revitalize In Reach groups- Minister meet with leaders monthly;	

Theme 5: Engaging with the Larger Community and Issues of justice

The inherent worth and dignity of every person; justice, equity, and compassion in human relations; the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large; the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all; respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part: fully five of our seven UU principles call us to action outside the walls of our church.

We do this work not to “help” or “rescue” others, but for ourselves because we believe, as Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

In this section, the four current social justice groups at UUCSS (Defending Democracy, Green Sanctuary, Racial Justice Task Force, and Rainbow Alliance) set out goals for their individual groups and plans to explore the intersections among them.

Goal	Year 1 – July 2019 to June 2020	Who	Year 2 – July 2020 to June 2021	Year 3 – July 2021 to June 2022
Create opportunities for individuals to better understand and talk about issues of racial justice and equity as a first step in dismantling white supremacy	Conduct ColorBlind2ColorBrave workshop	Racial Justice Task Force	Work for establishment of 8 th principle	Work for establishment of 8 th principle
	Conduct one worship service			
	Offer one auction event			
Manifest our belief in our 7th principle through meaningful individual and collective action	Meet goal of 25% additional congregation members using renewal sources for residential electricity	Green Sanctuary	Build relationships to promote environmental justice	Work toward a just transition away from fossil fuels

	Mobilize congregation to lobby for state-level climate bills			Work collectively to promote environmental justice
	Conduct annual Earth Day events to lift up our 7 th principle			
Raise awareness of democracy with UCCSS youth and facilitate youth participation in democracy and defending democracy	Work with YRUU and/or Middle School exploring different possibilities for democratic engagement or defending democracy	Defending Democracy with YRUU and/or Middle School RE	Facilitate youth participation in a youth-selected Defending Democracy project	
Promote voter participation by increasing voter registration and turnout and by fighting voter suppression	-Determine need for voter registration support locally -If there is a need, partner with local groups to facilitate voter registration, especially with any underrepresented populations -Get trained to register voters	Defending Democracy	-Continue with voter registration -Promote voter turnout -Find ways to fight voter suppression	-Support automatic voter registration -Address gerrymandering -Work to make election day a federal holiday through new federal legislation
Renew our Welcoming Congregation Vows	Conduct a welcoming worship service	Rainbow Alliance	-Work with Worship committee and minister to incorporate welcoming worship services into our annual calendar of worship -Initiate Welcoming Days of Observance -Support a Welcoming Project	Begin offering annual Welcoming Congregation Modules
Support our transgendered and gender non-	Explore how to best serve the trans and gender		Outline an action plan based on the research	

conforming members, peers, and broader community.	nonconforming community by engaging with them directly			
Create social forums among UUs in the area that bring allies and queer persons together for fun, support, and learning from each other.	Organize a UUCSS potluck for UUs in the local area to bring allies and queer persons together in a social setting			
Take actions on behalf of the congregation and on behalf of queer persons in a way that reflects their desires, needs, preferences, and concerns	Conduct a series of three “Listening Sessions” with relevant sub-groups to gain deeper understanding of their desires, needs, preferences, and concerns		Bring information gained back to the congregation as a whole	
Enhance understanding and collaboration within our congregation across our identified social justice groups	Conduct UUCSS Social Justice summit	Racial Justice Task Force; Green Sanctuary; Defending Democracy; Rainbow Alliance	-Identify joint “intersectional” goals	Energize and mobilize congregation around said goal
			Commit to a time-limited common project	
Build strong linkages with the outside community and engaging in meaningful social justice work as respectful partners	Explore ways for UUCSS Social Justice groups individually and/or collectively to become supportive allies with groups in the larger community locally and within our state			