



Directions for Our Future: Possibilities to Ponder and Discuss!

Design Programs to Meet Our Changing Needs

Our congregation offers a wide and exciting variety of programs for its members: worship, spiritual growth, support groups, educational programs, social programs, and opportunities to be involved in service to others.

The challenge: sustaining these vital programs, to continue to grow and deepen them, and to be responsive to changing times and membership.

Possibilities:

- Add to children's programs, e.g., music, visual arts, sports, and after school programs.
- Encourage new activities, such as camp, service projects, and coffee houses, which are both social and spiritual.
- Address religious diversity with specific programming (e.g., Passover Seder, Buddhist meditation, UU Christian fellowship, humanist discussion group).

Build to Meet Current and Anticipated Program Needs

In the past decade we have built the office and RE wing, created the Schultz-Cahalan Social Hall, renovated four classrooms, landscaped and planted the courtyard, and created the back patio and Memorial Wall. However, our Sunday attendance is reaching our sanctuary capacity, our meeting room spaces are inadequate to the demands on them, and the old classroom wing is obsolete.

The challenge: devising a good plan and raising the money to pay for it.

Possibilities:

- Expand and renovate the sanctuary. (*master plan* ✓)
- Create comfortable spaces for meetings and adult Religious Education.
- Build for new programs such as young adults, teens, additional staff, and more children.
- Conduct a capital campaign. (*in planning*)
- Acquire off-campus spaces, e.g., a campus center at UNM, a site for family camping, and sites for UU congregations not yet "born."

Expand Public Awareness of Liberal Religion in New Mexico

We have a sign on the corner and serve as a site for community events. We participate in community service programs, such as Project Share and Habitat for Humanity, and give to community projects through the loose change offering. We're a member of Albuquerque Interfaith. But the light of liberal religion in New Mexico is obscure or invisible to too many people.

The challenge: focusing the message and finding the means to get it out.

Possibilities:

- Collaborate with other New Mexico UU groups to get the word out in the media
- Host and sponsor public issues forums and debates on complex issues like prison reform, community-based mental health care, and the environment
- Videotape our worship services and learn how to use them with "living room size" groups in places such as Edgewood and Belen (✓)
- Explore distance learning technologies for child and adult RE statewide
- Take on a large and visible social service project and publicize it well

Our Mission Covenant

We, the members of First Unitarian Church of Albuquerque, agree to:

- Promote the spiritual, intellectual, and personal growth of each member
- Minister to each other in an atmosphere of welcome, acceptance, and caring
- Be a positive force for social, environmental, and economic action
- Promote the wider understanding of our purposes and principles in the larger community
- Provide a dynamic religious education program for all ages

To these ends, we declare our commitment to the health and vitality of this liberal religious community.

Deepen Our Relationships with Unitarian Universalism

We have become more aware that we are part of a larger UU family. We have attained Fair Share status with our regional and national UU dues, we have hosted an intern, we have sent delegates to meetings and conferences, and with our increasing size we have become increasingly responsible for the role of liberal religion in our district.

The challenge: capitalizing on the many resources available regionally and nationally, and making our own resources available to others.

Possibilities:

- Have a ministerial program. (✓)
- Work with Southwestern UU congregations to develop and advocate General Assembly resolutions on immigration and other border issues.
- Invite other UU congregations to visit Albuquerque during the Gathering of Nations to learn more about Native American culture.

Expand Our Ministry to Young Adults Aged 19–35

We always have had some young adults: our own grown-up youth, persons at UNM, and young adults who are establishing their careers and families. We value this group of UUs; they are our future! We would like to do more to assist them in organizing to meet their needs and to be more active in the life of the church.

The challenge: growing younger and wiser by discerning and responding to the perceptions and interests and needs of people born after 1970.

Possibilities:

- Develop a UU presence at UNM. (*in progress*)
- Make sure we are welcoming to the racial and ethnic diversity of the younger generation.
- Sponsor and participate in young adult and family service projects locally and abroad, e.g., in Mexico, Central America, or Transylvania. (*New Orleans*)
- Sponsor forums, or perhaps host a blog, for parents dealing with challenges such as GLBT, conscientious objection, and living a balanced life.

Get Organized for Our Size

We have been very successful in recruiting leaders and carrying on the many tasks of congregational governance. Recent initiatives such as those of the Membership Committee and Leadership Training Team bode well for continuation of such success.

The challenge, especially as we grow larger and more complex: ensuring that we sustain the culture of voluntarism, flexibility, and resourcefulness that energizes our spirits and that is responsive to changing times and membership.

Possibilities:

- Update policies, bylaws, and procedures. (✓)
- Concentrate on leadership training and volunteer management to help more people take part in the church's work. (✓)