Congregational Meeting
February 3, 2024
Flip Charts (sub-grouped)

(numbers in parentheses are the number of dots placed on that item during the prioritization)

I. STRENGTHS

A. Mission & Values

1. Our love and compassion **(1)**
2. Discernable mission (Welcoming, Loving, Growing Spiritually, Seeking Justice) **(6)**
3. Our connections to each other
4. Strong sense of community
5. A history of our congregation that we are proud of
6. Non-dogmatic
7. Inclusive - DEI implemented **(2)**
8. Safe space for youth **(2)**
9. Welcoming atmosphere / welcoming congregation **(1)**
10. Civil and kind culture **(2)**

B. People

11. Michael Galib **(3)**
12. Rev Denis **(4)**
13. Lee Cowan
14. Sara Kaplow
15. Strong staff
16. Willing volunteers
17. Long-term loyal membership
18. Varied interests and passions
19. Great fellow condo owners
20. Generosity of resources sharing (Sanctuary art, garden, walkway…)
21. We address realities and are adaptable
22. Culinary talent **(1)**
23. Engaged youth
24. Innovative ideas
25. Untapped potential
26. Many artist members

C. Programs & Activities

27. RE Program **(1)**
    a. RE Program teaches good values & nature emphasis
28. Programs offered for the community (plays, concerts)
29. Various events & activities offered / Commitment to resume pre-COVID ongoing activities

30. Choir
31. Pastoral care offered
32. OWL program
33. Community sewing space
34. Quarterly dinners
35. Major fundraisers/activities (Dining for Dollars+ / Holiday Fair)
36. Sense of fun

D. Worship

37. Lay-led services
38. Services streamed on Zoom

E. Leadership

39. Committed and talented lay leaders
40. Comprehensive depth of leadership experience
41. Strong financial management / oversight
42. A history of our congregation that we are proud of
43. Democratic approach to governance and development
44. Openness to collaboration with outside entities including other faiths **(1)**
45. Strong committees **(2)**
    a. E.g., Helping Hands Committee
    b. Strong Social Justice Committee (long-term) **(2)**

F. Infrastructure

46. Own our building
47. Breeze

G. Facilities

48. Beautiful garden
49. Library

H. General

50. Location within the state - near URI, liberal, not proximal to other UU
    a. On Saugatucket Pond
51. Newsletter - improved communication system **(1)**
52. Access to UUA information and resources
53. Social media presence
54. Ongoing partnerships - location to Johnnycake Center, PDC, etc.
55. Opportunities for learning - Rev's Reflections

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II. CHALLENGES

A. Demographics of UUCSC

1. Aging population **(6)**
2. Continued work to figure out how to best integrate RE with the adult congregation **(1)**
3. How to reach new individuals and families / move to community **(9)**
    a. Change our mindset from recruiting **to** serving new members and families **(3)**
4. How do we create relevance for young adults?
5. Increase in diversity needed
6. Maintain current identity

B. Financial

7. Financial sustainability / finding sustaining financial resources
8. Limited resources for funds, so need to ask the same people for funds over and over again
9. Lack of awareness in congregation of complete financial situation - operational needs vs facility/capital needs - Need more frequent and detailed communications regarding UUCSC finances
10. Lack of understanding of the financial plan and how things fit together - pledge vs capital campaign vs other fundraising **(1)**
11. Lack of awareness of legacy giving / planned giving vehicles (bequests) **(2)**

C. Involvement

12. Same people are doing everything
    a. Long-term volunteers, especially committee chairs, are tired and burning out
13. Difficulty recruiting new people for leadership positions (Board, committee chairs)
    a. Need for leadership training / mentorship
14. Committees need members
15. Need for wider congregation involvement to support social justice initiatives
16. Need people to serve as virtual hosts or we will not have services on ZOOM.
17. Need people to learn how to set up phone for ZOOM for services
18. Many ideas (see Opportunities) but who will step up to make them happen?

D. Inter / Intra Congregation

19. Common values
20. Board / congregation vision and action alignment
21. Rumors
    a. Reluctance to go directly to the person and ask if rumor is true
22. Accessibility - physical and programmatic
23. “Walk the talk”
24. Need for more information / communication
25. Need for elevator speech to capture the essence of UUCSC
26. Need for clearly articulated vision and priorities

27. Climate resiliency plan
28. Visibility at Washington County events

E. Facility

29. Aging building
    a. Building needs a significant amount of work to be sustainable for the future.
    b. Need for a capital campaign to raise sufficient funds to maintain the facility for the long-term
    c. Congregation needs to know exactly what the building needs and cost estimates
30. More space
31. Kitchen not usable (Stove not vented; very small)
32. Lack of signage to make location visible
33. Stage space too small for choir to expand

F. Technology

34. Sound system needs continued improvement - choir and sanctuary (esp. hearing loss) **(1)**
35. Technological barriers to presentations & conferences **(2)**
36. Need people with technology expertise to take charge of tech needs for services **(2)**
37. Need more people able to set up ZOOM for services (iphone, sound system…)

G. External Environment

38. Rapid changes in our world - how can we respond? (Everything changes)
    a. Response to political environment / public statements / care for self and community
39. Shifting demographics of South County

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III. OPPORTUNITIES

A. Building Connections / Partnerships

1. Outreach to other communities - e.g. URI, newcomers in south county, esp retirees
2. Reach out to local tribal members, sustainable farms to learn more
3. Reach out to young people through our young people, esp. LGBTQ+ **(1)**
    a. Have groups invite new people to attend i.e. retirees, college students… **(2)**
4. Build strong relationships with other congregations - UUs and other faiths **(2)**
    a. More involvement with “interfaith”
    b. Connect with other UU Congregations
5. Build a relationship with a “sister” faith organization (like Congregation Beth David has with St. Peter’s-by-the-Sea)

B. Opportunities for additional Social Justice activities

6. Pick an issue in our local community to organize and advocate for - e.g. affordable and accessible healthcare, low-income housing …
7. Engage more people within our congregation in social justice activities
8. Climate action **(2)**
9. Promote food & clothing donations for Johnnycake Center
10. Provide transportation for housebound people - volunteers / directory / van?
11. Spread awareness of who we are - create an elevator speech **(2)**
12. Strengthen our activities taking place in nature settings
13. Strengthen our activities that include the larger community **(7) (See below)**

C. Opportunities to Build Connections within UUCSC

14. Return of annual picnic, Aug/Sept
15. Coffee hour
16. Soup/luncheons quarterly/seasonal
17. Social events - games
18. Improved communication with e-news
19. Deepen congregational relationships through initiatives like sidekicks, small groups… **(2)**
20. Study groups - read together
    a. Theological discussion group - ongoing **(1)**
    b. Programs to educate about other faiths - inviting people of those faiths to educate us
    c. Go deeper into our own faith **(3)**
21. Continue OWL **(1)**
22. Make leadership roles accessible to younger folks. / Offer leadership training program or mentorship.
23. Recruit younger committee members **(3)**
24. Winter holiday celebrating our UU values
25. Stoke the feeling of a “church family”
26. Improve connection to RE during Sunday service **(1)**
27. Expand use of Breeze as way to connect with each other and manage whole church
28. Offer more opportunities for fun

D. Opportunities to Build Connections with the broader community

29. Strengthen our activities that include larger community **(7)**
30. Opportunities to spread our love and compassion with the community
31. Strengthen our web of connection - offer the peace that our connection brings to others
32. Speaker series to engage entire local community
33. Bring back Music ‘n More at Lilypads and/or other performances
34. Film nights **(2)**
35. Events for community, e.g. festival days **(1)**
36. Study groups - read together - open to the community
    a. Programs to learn about other faiths - discussions with people of different faiths

37. Community dances (Contra & Square Dances, “free” dance, dance lessons…)
38. Community choir events - singing at outside events **(1)**
    a. Expanded choir performance opportunities
39. Summer camp or other efforts to attract families with children
40. Offer our space to non-profit groups to use **(2)**
41. Listen more to know what our community needs - in south county and within our congregation
42. Communicate more about what we’re doing and who we are
43. Can OWL be offered to outside community people?

E. Opportunities to Raise Income

44. Promote the building as a rental for events & meetings (AA, other 12-step programs…)
45. Host additional fundraisers (art auction, Music ‘n More, films…)
46. Capital campaign needed to address significant building maintenance issues
47. Host dance lessons / art lessons / music lessons …
48. Seek a partner with whom to share the building, much of which sits empty most of the week (share expenses)

F. Other Opportunities

49. Seek grants for energy efficiency projects / building projects / other projects
50. Interfaith force for shifting reality
51. Consider and explore our organizational structure

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IV. HOPES / GOALS / RESULTS

A. Hopes (Concrete things wished for)

1. Better lighting in the parking lot **(1)**
2. Move sign for better visibility
3. Add to plantings out front
4. Fix fence gate near dam in backyard
5. Build a permanent outdoor meditation garden
6. Community garden
7. Become a Columbarium - resting place for cremains
8. Support RE - livestream the service downstairs **(1)**

B. Bigger Hopes

Bigger Hopes for our Facilities

9. Employ a sexton
10. Resolve moisture infiltration problem & other facility issues

11. Build an outdoor gathering area - e.g. pavilion **(1)**
12. Install a generator
13. Commercial kitchen **(2)**
14. Expand the choir area
15. Larger indoor community space **(1)**
16. Take our technology to the next level -e.g. large screen, hearing aids connected **(1)**

Bigger Hopes - General

17. Employ a technology person
18. Continue supporting/replenishing the Hurdis Fund
19. Additional participants beyond the usuals
20. Initiate whole congregation events to inspire participation
21. Worship experiences outside of Sundays
22. Continued congregation growth **(5)**
    a. Increase our membership - young members, families, LGBTQ …

C. Longer-Term Large-Scale Goals

23. Change the world one person at a time with love. Whether or not others join UUCSC, they will be better for connecting with us, as will we.
24. Raise sufficient capital funds such that Facilities has the resources it needs to address the building needs in a timely manner.
25. Raise an Endowment, the income of which would partially support annual operations **(2)**
    a. Ensure financial stability for the long-term sustainability of the congregation **(5)**
26. Run totally on solar
27. Use the facility to provide temporary shelter
28. Be a driving force for addressing climate change in wider community / Be a community resource during climate tragedies **(3)**