

Strategic Planning Session 4

Sept 24th, 2017

Attending: Lillie Lentz, Stephen Lentz, Judy Gaylord, Maureen Sherlock, Mary Burcher, Martha McDougall, Margot Lods, Sandra Jacobsen, Marion Pape, Rowland Mak, John tiffany, Leigh Waters, Adeline Morris, Roberta Clair, Katherine Maas, Valerie Howe, Bruce Sterling, Barbara Boyle, Pam Harte, Philip Symons, Kristina Stevens, Helen Hvozdzanski, John Hvozdzanski, Dawn Fizzard, Jim Jordan, Emily Whitney, Stu Whitney, Nancy Dobbs, Rebecca Mellett, Peter Scales, Susan Layng, Jane Wilson, Mary Cramer, Pat Conroy, Forrest Smith, Lorna Anthony, Brad Clarke , Madeleine Clarke

Facilitators: Reverend Shana Lynngood and Marion Sollazzo

1.0 Review of BIG Picture Data - information focused on reviewing research data on changing spiritually in Cascadia and the population growth projections from Island Health planning department.

2.0 How Should this Data Inform our Strategic Planning? - reflecting on the data presented the groups were asked to brainstorm their thoughts on how this data should inform our strategic planning. What follows are there response by group;

Group 1

- ❖ UU's from across Canada are part of our growth target (retirees)
- ❖ Retirees are a good target, skilled
- ❖ UU's across Canada gradually decreasing
- ❖ Suspect that many current UU's were originally spiritual but not religious. We have something to offer a some are the "nones" on surveys
- ❖ Question - What gets us here? What keeps us? How do these questions get answered? We need a continuous survey of new members over 5 years. Member's questionnaires etc.
- ❖ Promote ourselves better outside the church
- ❖ We (FUCV) are hard to find
- ❖ UU identity (Visual, other) is not out there
- ❖ Capitalize on spirituality in nature to promote this beautiful place (FUCV)

- ❖ Go out to the community-where people are, rent room in library to offer services etc there.
- ❖ Welcome people to our big events - book sale etc.
- ❖ Reach out to the public!!!!
 - This is a very together place - good core strength

Group 2

- ❖ What is this about?
 - Our survival as a religion?
 - Our premises? (Physical location)
 - Bring people here?
 - Build it and they will come... will this apply in 15 yrs Or 30 years?
 - Still NO transit!!!!
 - “My family memorial is here! I don’t want to move.
- ❖ Who do want to engage?
 - Do age demographics matter!?
- ❖ Break out into satellites? De we serve more people?
 - Use schools
- ❖ What are we offering?
 - Church?
 - Salvation?
 - Guidance?
 - Support?
 - Dogma?
- ❖ As other churches become more “open” and “Progressive” - What sets UU’s apart?
- ❖ Send observers in other communities to observe and make notes
- ❖ JOIN in community to organize community events, protests, action.
- ❖ Social action - focus into the local, support compassion in action in the community
- ❖ We’re an urban church in a rural setting - it sets us apart from the community

- ❖ Who are we inviting? What do they find appealing?
- ❖ We're talking about the future SO we should have young people do the planning/
- ❖ Climate change will impact the validity of these demographics
- ❖ What other stressors might effect our planning
- ❖ Create a “young and fun” media engagement. Youth planning
- ❖ Do we need to be “church”? Does spirituality = religion?
- ❖ Enhancing our intergenerational worship

Group 3

- ❖ Consider Western Communities location - satellite options
- ❖ Consider transit
- ❖ Working class appeal
- ❖ Electronic community and communication
- ❖ Church term should be expanded - i.e. people not the church building
- ❖ Bigger outreach presence
- ❖ Name change reconsider - words have meaning
- ❖ Put principles into action - community gardens/food forests in the Western Communities
- ❖ What are people looking for? (easy answers?)
- ❖ Weddings/marriage
- ❖ Create spiritual community for families and those without children
- ❖ Reduce formula of the services, “NONES” may not like the ritual
- ❖ Different forms of services
- ❖ Using end of life ceremonies to reach seniors
- ❖ Outreach to seniors
- ❖ Appeal to folks by searching for truth and meaning not that we have the answers
- ❖ Anger at current world establishments (baby boomers/generational anger) connect to the anger and turn into positive to meet current needs
- ❖ Boost up online services options (PODCASTS, videos etc)

- ❖ Expand the types of music - possible 2 services “traditional” and “contemporary”
- ❖ Each 1 teach 1 - talk up our community
- ❖ Relationship with Capital
- ❖ Share with other “churches” - space, programs, music
- ❖ Food draws people - ‘Food Vespers” but not at the church
- ❖ Satellite church
- ❖ Education for our members about why our online services are so limited
- ❖ How do we connect people to this church without having to be physically present

Group 4

- ❖ Population is growing and ageing AND people will travel to attend (e.g. Glad Tidings)
 - Seeking answers, security, community, fun and food.
- ❖ Money
- ❖ Challenge UU open , no creed, dogma
- ❖ Redo membership survey --- Who are we? What brings us? What keeps us?
- ❖ “NONE” may be open to a spiritual space
 - Potential UU’s? Who are they, what do they want? What do they need?
- ❖ Music, singing
- ❖ Physical Space? - Do we sell ,rent, use land differently
- ❖ Learning
- ❖ Music and singing
- ❖ Diversity, multi-faith
- ❖ OWL and RE are draws

Group 5

- ❖ We have something to offer the “NONES” as well as our ageing population
- ❖ The world needs us i.e. tolerance and social justice

- ❖ No “fear factor” here: does it keep folks going to evangelical churches?
- ❖ Are we uncomfortable proselytizing?
- ❖ Evangelicals market; UU’s do not
- ❖ How do we reach out/welcome/become known/connect with...
- ❖ What got you here? What keeps you coming back
- ❖ Our location is not in the demographic area of growth.
- ❖ How do we connect with...
 - Western Communities and young families
 - Downtown and our ageing members
- ❖ Expand our vision of ourselves to include Western folks and downtown seniors
- ❖ How and where are our volunteers going to? Coming from?
- ❖ Co-locate our demographic groups e.g. daycares and seniors housing and work on our land
- ❖ How might we use technology better to help keep us better connected?
- ❖ How could we use this property more broadly?
 - Community garden, community activities to pull people in, possibly a community centre on this site?
 - Increase the use productivity of this land

3.0 Personal Reflections - for the final task the people were given an opportunity to draft their personal reflections to the questions “**What is missing for you?**” “**What are next steps?**”

The following are their unedited responses;

- We need to make better use of our greeters and ushers. Ask to speak to newcomers and find out what brought them to our service.... Then pass their information to our membership team.
- I would like to hear more about what gets people here and what keeps them
- I would like to explore ways we are presently working with other community groups and how to do more e.g. GVAT

- Let's expand our vision to see ourselves as an umbrella to several satellites. Eg invite Capital to an event, several of us could cook for the Sooke young families gathering and join them to support them getting together
- One open mic poetry reading per month
- Have Melora or someone else continue Melora's walks
- Have a stronger connection with Capital including having some of our worship associates be at Capital on Sundays...if they would like it. Send attractive invitations to them for our jazz vespers, Friday night suppers etc.
- We need a task force to look at all the ramifications of our location. We are in an ALR ...with no good natural draw. Public transit will only happen if there is a significant population shift and that won't easily happen in an ALR
- Since we are a farm can we "exploit" it
- We need a research project on our membership base on who we are and why we are members of the church
- Next steps; consolidate info gathered to date, decide who will make the decisions and how they will ensure all voices are heard
- Gather more data;
 - Who are neighbours are and what they seek?
 - What brings people in?
 - What makes people stay?
 - Decide what to do
 - Devise a communication plan
 - Plan for periodic re-visits to see if we are on track
- More joy celebration especially in music (less traditional, less religious) easier, more engaging singing teaching for all. Singing outside e.g. summer singing at Beaver Lake, Cameron Bandshell,
- More outdoor activities/less formal
- Work parties with our neighbours, a kids camp, cider making, POW WOW or such to show our faith in action
- Concentrate our activity to giving locally e.g. GVAT, school breakfast etc.
- Audit our skills, talents we can use e.g. lead yoga etc...
- More mini opportunities for spiritual discussion along the lines of Melora's' walk; theme discussions once per month
- Develop cross generational "families" so young and old can support each other
- What do families need /want from us older folks? Attend kids events? Play games, provide transportation? Etc...

- I'd like to see services that have a radically different form and content, more contemporary music
- Create satellite mini events/services in the community at libraries especially the Westshore
- Reconsider the use of the word "church". We need a better word than "community". Many people are turned off by the word church...
- I stopped coming for awhile because I got really bored singing our same songs. Many are lovely but there's a big world of music out there
- Our location: it's a barrier. Unless or until we can be more central to growing demographics. I was a choir member at our old church I dropped out because it was too far from home and did not want to drive in the dark or inclement weather
- Find ways to keep our liberal light burning in the FUTURE and to serve is our core.
- I don't know yet!
- Nothing is missing for me. I attend service when it feels right. Both UU and Sikh Kundalini yoga work for me.
- Incorporate ideas from today. Good Work!
- Invite the younger people to engage by speaking with them through their modes: social media
- Invite community to our place to share and use the space OPEN HOUSE
- Can we be the local "Shelter" "crisis" centre in case of disaster
- Be less exclusive. 1st hand activism as oppose to 2nd and 3rd hand action
- Community Kitchen for church members! (I was told no due to insurance)
- Support other organizations in a hands on, visible way i.e. Woodwynn Farms.
- Co-housing for members
- Diversity - more inclusion of marginalized groups we're almost all white! Middle class, Protestant with a GAY HAT
- In house support for our own members e.g. Respite care, Family support groups, Community- shopping, cooking, skills exchange
- Change service set up to what we have in the summer - circles so we see more than backs of heads
- Focus on strategies that are church wide for short periods of time. I see too much energy goes into too many committees that then die and sputter. Let's do church wide focus for 2 months and get real progress - everyone responsible to find how they can contribute to major thrusts (eg background work as well as vocal and visible activities)
- I want after church conversations like Capital does b/c social chit chat is not always as important as shifting my thinking by hearing others mental contributions

- I believe we would benefit by looking at the “best practices” of other faith streams that are growing. I’m thinking Baptists
- We undervalue , underutilize the potential of the property in this location - “nature” as religion is prevalent in many cultures - our own indigenous people are willing to share and have much to teach about “forest bathing” “wilding”, “foraging”
- Programming that features intergenerational knowledge that is almost lost...how to survive when there’s no WIFI service!
- We are missing/not addressing that we do not have a visual identity that can represent us in the community and in our church. UU covenant is never posted/displayed or advertised
- We need to bring in the same business planning (not for profit) models as part of how our strategic plan is built and how to increase our financial base to support strategic plan
- We are missing a younger energy helping to do the volunteering
- Mostly nothing is missing for me
- Expand the type of worship services. Experiment with more contemporary services and contemporary music
- Improve our online presence
- Address the lack of public transit
- Look again at changing the word church in our name
- What is missing for me is connection with the greater community - relating to different aspects such as environmental, artistic, musical I guess more outreach but also more exciting use of our property that will give people a reason to be here and be comfortable to be part of this community
- Satellite churches
- Podcasts on spiritual themes
- Finding people where they are (i.e. nature)
- Developing property for gardeners
- Have groups of people every Sunday who make new people feel welcome and show them around
- We need better info from our members. What brought them here, what keeps them here
- We should broaden our musical styles in service
- Do not lose sight of continuing to appeal to current members
- Lots of opportunity in marketing improvements especially online but also building our image

- Next steps - find a way to get to making a decision on or priorities so we can act, I find it easier to be acting than making a plan
- Get input from those members who could not attend the sessions they have valuable insights
- A summary of today input posted on our website, board in Lion Hall and in our monthly bulletin
- Personally I am content and satisfied. I come for community... I am involved...it can be overwhelming sometimes. Our next step should be well thought out. It seems a Herculean task. I am excited about the future
- **Next steps**
 - Repeat part of to internal survey we did 8-9 years ago to see what current members want from church. We need to serve current members
 - Find a way to survey UU's who have resigned or drifted away during the past decade. Then consider changes to draw them back
 - Engage someone (a company? religious studies student?) to survey families along W Saanich Road and environs. What do they yearn for? Then consider tailoring our existing programs or creating new ministries to serve them
- **Next Steps**
 - Summarize what is wonderful and working and plan to build on that
 - Survey our member on who we are, what brings us here and will keep us
 - Share findings of survey with others (Capital, Youth, other, outreach)
 - Celebrate and keep going
- **Missing:**
 - Vision and clarity of purpose...Growth? Is 300 -500 OK? Place? - create land use plan/look at alternative space
 - Diversity! Remember the principle, the world is looking for help and understanding. UU already has fabulous programs and materials to share... meet the demand
- As we move forward trying to appeal to others please don't lose the folks who volunteered their time and talents to get us here, have a sense of belonging and familiarity with the current process. Please don't leave them behind. Connections are important
- Not church
- Test in Sooke
- Answer for young people
- Support mechanisms for expanding and clarifying the words we use to talk to others - Engage others in discussions about UU principles, actions

- **Next Steps**
 - Anything we do is interim, ultimately sell this place, rent or buy or share near where the people are and where transit it...the only question is when.
- **Missing**
 - Input from those who did not show up to sessions ...membership survey
 - Input from those who showed up then left (survey those who left or dropped out)
 - Input from Glad Tidings
 - Input from research on this subject
- More fully employ social media in our work
- **Missing:** In depth exploration of the big picture “Who are we in the Universe”. Acknowledgement and discussion of the major issues of our time: Climate change and now possibility of nuclear war. These are of great concern to many NONES who would welcome a place to share and/or find community
- **NEXT STEPS:** Offer small group discussions at locations more accessible than our church
- **Problem -** Cascadians do not come because Sunday late morning, early afternoon is too valuable for enjoying nature. **Solution:** Friday or Sunday evening services, after church hiking group
- **Idea:** Invest in YOUTUBE channel to promote services (Melora and Shana’s homilies)
- **Idea:** Surveys when people attend UU info sessions - what brought you here? When people become members - Why, When members pass the 5 year threshold -why did they stay?
- **Ideas:** Church rock and roll band
- **What’s missing for me** is an adult education program and community outreach
- **Next Steps**
 - Set up an education program for 2018/2019
 - Hold activities outside of our church in the community
 - Rent a room in a library and present a topic (such as adult education) that would run over 6 weeks
 - Rent a room in a library and have a service on any day but a Sunday