

A PLAN FOR OUR FUTURE

2007 – 2015



First Unitarian Church
Pittsburgh, PA

September 24, 2006

DRAFT

Historical Background

By David Herndon

The present Sanctuary Building was constructed in 1904. Rev. Walter Mason was minister at this time. The organ was a gift from Andrew Carnegie. When Rev. Mason died, on January 1, 1929, the congregation made plans for a two-story addition to the Sanctuary Building in his memory. A drawing of the proposed building appeared on the front page of the First Unitarian Church newsletter for March 17, 1929. Nationwide economic difficulties beginning in October of that year forced the church to postpone these plans.

The present Classroom Building was constructed in 1954 and it was dedicated to the memory of Rev. Walter Mason twenty-five years after his death. The organ was refurbished sometime during the 1950s. Rev. Irving Murray was minister at this time.

The chancel area of the Sanctuary was expanded with the addition of the lower platform. Four rows of pews were removed for this purpose. Rev. Paul Beattie was minister at this time.

In 1991, approximately \$100,000 was raised to replace the slate roof on the Sanctuary Building. Insulation was added under the slate roof.

In 1994, the Board of Trustees asked Nancy Spear to serve as our capital campaign consultant. Her comments prompted the Board to lead the congregation through a collaborative process to develop a mission statement and a long-range plan. By 1996, Nancy Spear had embarked upon another career path, and the Board of Trustees asked Jerry King to serve as our capital campaign consultant. With Jerry's assistance, First Unitarian Church raised \$600,000 (including two grants from local foundations totaling \$60,000) to create the Garden Lobby, install an elevator, and complete several other capital improvements. As a result, both the Sanctuary Building and the Classroom Building are now handicap accessible. The new space was dedicated in January 1998.

In 1999 and 2000, First Unitarian Church received approximately \$100,000 in additional capital funds from church members. This money was used to clean the exterior stone of the Sanctuary Building and repair the steps leading to the bell tower entrance facing Morewood Avenue.

In January 2002, Rev. Terry Sweetser met with church leaders and conducted a visioning session for church members. Additional visioning sessions were conducted in March and April of that year. As a result of these gatherings, the Board of Trustees proposed a new long-range plan entitled "Living Our Principles." This long-range plan was largely written by Paul Flora. It was adopted by the congregation on September 9, 2001. Most of the program initiatives recommended in this report have been instituted.

In 2002, First Unitarian Church received a \$200,000 Historic Urban Church grant from the Unitarian Universalist Association. This money was used for several capital improvements to the Sanctuary: the ceiling was cleaned and refinished, the lighting was upgraded, and two of the three large stained glass windows were completely restored.

In 2005, the Board of Trustees invited Rev. Tricia Hart to serve as our capital campaign consultant. She met with members of the congregation in September, 2005, and February, 2006, and she wrote a report following each of these gatherings.

In July, 2006, the Board of Trustees invited Rev. David Herndon to summarize and extend the content of Tricia Hart's reports into a coherent long-range plan for the congregation to consider throughout the fall of 2006. "A Plan for Our Future: 2007 -- 2015" is the result.

Congregational Process Timeline

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| July – September 2006 | Board of Trustees adopts preliminary long-range plan |
| September 24, 2006 | Board of Trustees presents preliminary long-range plan to congregation via Sunday morning services and meetings after services |
| October 15, 22, and 29 | Board of Trustees receives ideas and suggestions from congregation regarding preliminary long-range plan |
| November – December 2006 | Board of Trustees revises preliminary long-range plan |
| January – March 2007 | Board of Trustees presents revised long-range plan to the congregation |
| April – May 2007 | Congregation votes to adopt revised long-range plan |
| Summer 2007 | Staff, Board of Trustees, and congregation begin to implement long-range plan |

A Plan for Our Future: 2007 -- 2015

By David Herndon
Preliminary Version for the Board of Trustees
Presented on September 20, 2006

Mission Statement (or Purpose)

The First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh provides an intentional, supportive, and inclusive religious community where individuals of all ages and diverse beliefs, sustained by the seven Unitarian Universalist principles, seek personal growth, and strive to promote social justice within the congregation and in the world beyond.

Vision Statement (or Direction)

First Unitarian Church intends to make enormous progress over the next eight years by encouraging individuals to make deeper connections (1) with one another, (2) with their own sense of purpose and responsibility, and (3) with the global human community in a time of tremendous challenge with respect to environmental sustainability, international peace, social justice, and human rights. We will provide abundant resources for encouraging these connections by expanding our budget for staff and programs, purchasing additional equipment, making capital improvements to our original building, and rebuilding our organ. Anticipating that our congregation will grow in numbers, we will acquire or construct additional space to accommodate more people and more activities.

What We Can Learn from the “Searching for Our Future” Process

Rev. Tricia Hart conducted focus group sessions with members of our congregation in September 2005 and February 2006. She summarized the results of these sessions in two reports which were presented to the Board of Trustees. The ideas and suggestions of church members and friends covered many different aspects of church life. Although few concrete plans were proposed, several general trends of thought can be identified. First, participants identified many current congregational strengths. Second, participants would like to see First Unitarian Church have a stronger presence in the community both with regard to social responsibility and with regard to sharing our Unitarian Universalist principles and values. Third, participants would like to encourage church growth by strengthening our process for welcoming newcomers. Fourth, participants would like to see us strengthen our lifespan religious education program. Fifth, participants would like to see First Unitarian Church make needed capital improvements and have additional space.

This plan reflects and extends all of these trends of thought, providing several Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Tangible (SMART) goals.

A Plan for Our Future: 2007 -- 2015

I. Making Deeper Connections

A. Making Deeper Connections with One Another

1. Small Groups
2. Pastoral Care
3. Young Adults
4. Newcomers
5. Electronic Communication

B. Making Deeper Connections with Our Sense of Purpose and Responsibility

1. Worship
2. Lifespan Faith Development
3. The Unitarian Universalist Association and the Ohio-Meadville District

C. Making Deeper Connections with the Global Human Community

1. Green Sanctuary
2. Social Justice Council
3. Performing Arts
4. Rites of Passage

II. Providing Abundant Resources

A. Staffing for Growth

B. Capital Improvements, Organ, and Additional Space

C. Annual Budget for Staff and Programs

D. Equipment

E. Endowments

A Plan for Our Future: 2007 -- 2015

Part I. Making Deeper Connections

Our vision statement encourages us to make deeper connections in three ways: first, with one another; second, with our own sense of purpose and responsibility; and third, with the global human community.

For purposes of imagination, we might suppose that in the next eight years our adult membership will grow by about one third, from 450 to 600, and that our population of children and youth will also grow by about one third, from 160 to 210.

A. Making Deeper Connections with One Another

The adult members of our religious community do make connections with one another when we gather in large groups for worship on Sunday mornings. However, our connections with one another are often more meaningful when they occur in more personal contexts such as small groups and pastoral care.

Three additional ways that we could do a better job of encouraging individuals to make connections with one another are programming for young adults, creating a more welcoming culture for newcomers, and appreciating the value of electronic communications.

1. Small Groups. We have three types of small groups: covenant groups, affinity groups, and performing arts groups. Ideally, every member of our congregation would participate regularly in at least one small group. Thus, we will continue to direct resources toward creating and sustaining small groups. In particular, we will build on our experience that covenant groups and performing arts groups work best when they have the guidance or support of a staff member.

Goal: Provide opportunities for members and friends of our church to get to know one another through small groups.

Action: Have one small group for every twenty adult members and friends of First Unitarian Church.

Action: Expand the number of people participating in performing arts groups by one-third (that is, from about eighty-five people to about one hundred and ten). We could do this either by accommodating twenty-five more people in our current performing arts groups, or by adding another performing arts group (for example, a gospel choir, or a percussion ensemble, or a drama ensemble, or a women's choir).

Action: Provide additional covenant group discussion guides.

2. Pastoral Care. At present our lay pastoral care program is undergoing a major restructuring. Ideally, each member of our congregation would receive pastoral care in times of personal trouble, distress, or challenge. Thus, we will continue to direct resources toward pastoral care. Our experience suggests that we can effectively provide pastoral care through the efforts of both staff members and lay people. The new pastoral care plan calls for more effective training for pastoral associates, pastoral contacts, and staff members. Our recently-instituted Addictions Ministry promises to be an important element of our pastoral care program.

Goal: Strengthen our methods of providing pastoral care.

Action: Implement the new pastoral care program.

Action: Provide meaningful and effective ongoing pastoral care training for pastoral associates, pastoral contacts, and staff members.

3. Young Adults. We will find ways to expand our programming for young adults (18 to 35 years of age), with the understanding that the age range for young adults encompasses a wide range of life experiences and developmental stages, and with the further understanding that some young adults may be participants in our religious community for only a short time.

4. Newcomers. Informed church observers and practitioners have suggested that membership growth is highly dependent on simply repelling fewer visitors! Because we want to share our faith, values, and principles with others, and because we want to strengthen our presence in the larger community, we will create a more welcoming culture for newcomers. We will provide timely personal contact as well as helpful information for those who are new to Unitarian Universalism or new to First Unitarian Church.

Goal: Strengthen our methods of welcoming newcomers. Present newcomers with a clear picture of the path to membership.

Action: Devise a sustainable method for entering contact information for all newcomers into our membership database.

Action: Devise a sustainable method for ensuring that each newcomer receives either a personal telephone call or a written greeting within three days after their Sunday morning visit.

5. Electronic Communications. We will recognize that we can address the spiritual needs of many prospective Unitarian Universalists by providing resources electronically. This could take several forms, including making sermon texts available at our website; encouraging individuals to visit the website of the Unitarian Universalist Association; and offering podcasts and webcasts.

Goal: Strengthen internal and external communication channels using new electronic communications technology.

Action: Establish an Electronic Communications Committee and invite this group to make specific recommendations about how we could use electronic communications more effectively.

B. Making Deeper Connections with Our Sense of Purpose and Responsibility

There are many different ways by which the people of First Unitarian Church can make deeper connections with their own sense of purpose and responsibility. Two principal ways are worship and lifespan faith development. The Unitarian Universalist Association and the Ohio-Meadville District also provide important resources for this purpose.

1. Worship. Our 11:00 worship service continues to attract many people, serving the needs of a broad spectrum of church members and friends. Because this worship service works reasonably well, we will maintain those things which have proven to be enduringly meaningful or satisfying. We could strengthen this service by rebuilding the organ, finding ways to enhance our music program, adopting techniques better suited to a large number of people for sharing joys and sorrows, honoring the minister's need for adequate sermon preparation time, and ensuring the presence of interesting and spiritually appropriate guest speakers on Sunday mornings when the minister is not preaching here.

Our 9:30 worship provides a meaningful sense of connection for the individuals and families who attend, although the number of people who attend has been smaller than we might have hoped. We could strengthen the 9:30 service by pursuing more fully the original vision of the early Sunday morning worship service as soulful, spirited, family-friendly, social-justice-oriented, and multicultural.

Our twelve summer worship services now consistently attract more than one hundred adults each Sunday. Two significant steps forward in recent years are having professional religious leaders most Sundays and having our worship accompanist present every Sunday. We could strengthen our summer worship services by providing additional funds for guest musicians, by establishing a distinct line item in the annual budget for summer worship leaders, and by continuing to seek ways to solve the problem of excessive heat in the sanctuary on many summer Sundays.

We could expand our worship offerings by instituting a weekly or monthly worship experience, not necessarily on Sunday, which would reflect the influence of contemporary worship models. One such model would be Soulful Sundown, which is especially intended for young adults.

Goal: Strengthen our 9:30 and 11:00 worship services, maintaining what works well and making beneficial changes as appropriate.

Action: Rebuild the organ. Begin by establishing an Organ Renovation Committee to recommend an appropriate plan for rebuilding the organ.

Action: Strengthen the foundation of the Sanctuary Choir by continuing to expand the choral library and seeking more adequate rehearsal space.

Action: Purchase and install video projection equipment in the sanctuary for use at the 9:30 service.

Action: Use hymns from the new hymnbook supplement Singing the Journey each week at the 9:30 service.

Action: Establish a small instrumental ensemble for accompaniment of hymns at the 9:30 service.

Goal: Establish a Worship Exploration Committee to recommend a plan for instituting a new weekly or monthly worship service reflecting the influence of contemporary worship models.

2. Lifespan Faith Development. Our ministry with children and youth continues to provide important experiences in faith development. We will sustain what we now offer, including regular Sunday morning classes from September through May, summer Sunday morning classes from June through August, Coming-of-Age and Our Whole Lives programs, and youth activities. We will honor and encourage our tradition of providing outstanding youth leadership at congregational, district, and national levels. We will continue to provide safe, informative, and inspirational travel opportunities for youth such as occasional trips to Boston to visit Unitarian Universalist historical sites.

Our campus ministry program has touched the lives of many students at local universities over the last four years. We will continue to support and strengthen this significant new part of our lifespan faith development program.

Faith development for adults includes not only the events coordinated by the Adult Religious Education Ministry Team, but also the events sponsored by the Sunday Morning Forum. We will continue to support the efforts of both of these groups. We will recognize the vitally important convergence of interests between the Membership Council and the Adult Religious Education Ministry with regard to the ongoing need for regularly providing attractive and helpful opportunities for newcomers to learn more about Unitarian Universalism.

Goal: Strengthen our ministry with children and youth.

Action: Continue to explore possibilities for establishing a Unitarian Universalist preschool operated by First Unitarian Church.

Action: Provide age-appropriate music performance groups for all our children and youth from kindergarten through high school

Action: Expand our staff to include paid leadership devoted to youth ministry. Someone currently part of our staff could provide this leadership, or we could hire an additional staff person.

Action: Provide additional space for an expanded number of children and youth.

Action: Encourage growth of the Endowment for Ministry with Children and Youth.

Goal: Strengthen our campus ministry program.

Action: Expand our campus ministry program to include additional local campuses such as Chatham College and Carlow University.

Action: Develop a plan to purchase or rent space for our campus ministry program in the South Craig Street area.

Action: Expand our campus ministry program so that it becomes a regional center serving Unitarian Universalist students throughout Western Pennsylvania. Regional programming might include webcasts of regular weekly gatherings taking place here in Pittsburgh, weekend events and occasional retreats which would be open to Unitarian Universalist students from colleges and universities in the surrounding region, and resources for starting and sustaining Unitarian Universalist student groups outside of Pittsburgh.

Action: Seek funding from other Unitarian Universalist churches in Southwestern Pennsylvania to help support the regional part of our campus ministry program.

Action: Encourage the professional growth of our campus ministry coordinator and expand the campus ministry position to half-time.

Action: Encourage growth of the Campus Ministry Endowment. Encourage gifts from alumni, faculty, staff, and parents.

Goal: Strengthen our adult religious education program.

Action: Ensure that our Adult Religious Education Ministry regularly provides attractive and helpful opportunities for faith development for individuals who are new to Unitarian Universalism.

Action: Ensure that our Adult Religious Education Ministry provides opportunities for faith development for adults who already understand the basics of Unitarian Universalism and who are searching for ways to

deepen their faith and their understanding of the religious dimension of personal growth, current events, family dynamics, and other aspects of life.

Action: Expand our staff to include paid leadership for our Adult Faith Development program. Someone currently part of our staff could provide this leadership, or we could hire an additional staff person.

3. The Unitarian Universalist Association and the Ohio-Meadville District.

National and regional denominational organizations can provide many wonderful resources for encouraging individuals to connect more deeply with their own sense of purpose and responsibility. These resources include the annual General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Ohio-Meadville District Summer Institute, workshops and consultants, the Unitarian Universalist Association Bookstore, Beacon Press and Skinner House Books, grants for congregational projects, the Unitarian Universalist World magazine, and the website of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

In addition to encouraging stronger national and regional denominational connections, we will sustain our partner church relationship with Unitarians in the Khasi Hills of India.

Goal: Strengthen our connections with the larger Unitarian Universalist community.

Action: Encourage a larger number of church members to attend the Ohio-Meadville Summer Institute.

Action: Expand the library budget so that our library can more completely fulfill its primary mission of maintaining a comprehensive collection of Unitarian Universalist books and other resources.

Action: Expand the operation of our church bookstore as a way of connecting individuals more knowledgeably with the larger Unitarian Universalist community.

Action: Support our Campus Ministry program in its efforts to encourage Unitarian Universalist students to attend General Assembly and other denominational gatherings.

C. Making Deeper Connections with the Global Human Community

We will recognize that the global human community has entered into a time of tremendous challenge with respect to environmental sustainability, international peace, social justice, and human rights. Understanding that our contributions toward solving these problems will most likely be modest, we will nevertheless seek to make concern for global challenges a central part of the life of our religious community.

Thus, we will have faith that the social application of our Unitarian Universalist principles and values can make a worthwhile contribution toward addressing the challenges facing the global human community.

Further, we will recognize that participation in church-sponsored social responsibility efforts can be a deeply satisfying and perhaps even spiritually essential experience for many individuals. Moreover, we will recognize that an active social responsibility program can have a beneficial and enlivening influence on the entire congregation. We will also recognize that we can address the spiritual needs of many prospective Unitarian Universalists by making connections between our Unitarian Universalist principles and contemporary issues of environmental sustainability, international peace, social justice, and human rights. Finally, we will recognize that our contributions will be more effective if we have a stronger institutional foundation and if our religious community includes more people working together.

We will be mindful of the importance of finding healthy, respectful, and appropriate ways to handle differences of opinion regarding social justice efforts.

We will recognize we can make deeper connections with the global human community not only through social responsibility, but also through the performing arts and through rites of passage.

1. Environmental Sustainability. We will encourage the Green Sanctuary Committee to help us understand how our congregation can implement environmentally-sustainable practices.

Goal: Adopt more environmentally sustainable practices at our church and encourage a deeper awareness of the importance of environmental sustainability among church members.

Action: Complete the “Green Sanctuary” certification program with the guidance of the Green Sanctuary Committee.

2. Social Justice Committee. For several years, our congregation has benefited from the efforts of groups such as the Anti-Racism Committee, Interweave, the Religious Education Committee, and the Social Justice Endowment Committee, which have supplemented the work of the Social Justice Committee. Thus, the social responsibility efforts of our congregation long ago expanded beyond the scope of a single committee, and the time has come to recognize this by restructuring our social responsibility program as a federation of special-focus groups. Further, we will encourage the formation of additional special-focus groups.

Goal: Encourage greater effort toward international peace, human rights, and social justice.

Action: Restructure our social responsibility program as a federation of special-focus groups working cooperatively.

Action: Work with a consultant supplied by the Unitarian Universalist Association to expand our social responsibility activities.

Action: Thoroughly explore the 2006 Study/Action Issue entitled “Peacemaking.”

3. Performing Arts. We will recognize that we can address the spiritual needs of many prospective Unitarian Universalists and many other individuals from the larger community by offering opportunities for enjoyment of the performing arts. We will maintain the folk music concert series that we co-sponsor with Calliope. We will also institute an additional concert series, allocating additional paid hours for a member of our music staff to provide professional guidance and coordination for this new venture.

Goal: Strengthen our capacity to offer opportunities for enjoyment of the performing arts.

Action: Expand our annual budget to include additional paid hours for a member of our music staff to establish, guide, and coordinate a new concert series at First Unitarian Church.

Action: Encourage growth of the Music Endowment.

4. Rites of Passage. We will recognize that we can address the spiritual needs of many prospective Unitarian Universalists and many other individuals from the larger community by providing space for and assistance with significant rites of passage. We will continue to make our facilities available to members of the larger community for rites of passage.

Part II. Providing Abundant Resources

Our vision statement calls us to provide abundant resources in support of our efforts to make the deeper connections described in Part I. We can practice good stewardship in many ways, including making provision for adequate staff, raising capital funds, having a strong annual canvass, providing adequate equipment, and strengthening our endowments.

A. Staffing for Growth.

One important part of our planning process is looking ahead to anticipate our staffing needs as our church grows. Following are two ways to estimate our staffing needs in the near future.

First, we could agree that additional staff would be beneficial in the following areas: (1) coordinating and creating adult programs, including both adult religious education classes and events focused on social justice, international peace, human rights, and environmental sustainability; (2) assisting with pastoral care; (3) assisting with the

creation and maintenance of covenant groups; (4) leading worship from time to time; (5) expanding our ministry with children and youth; (6) creating and leading an additional music performance group for adults, youth, or children; (7) coordinating a church-sponsored concert series; (9) expanding our campus ministry; and (10) improving our communications channels.

Second, we could use the rule of thumb that a church requires one full-time equivalent program staff person for every one hundred people in the building on Sunday mornings, including adults, youth, and children. Currently we have 3.2 full-time equivalent program staff positions (including David Herndon @ 1.0, Jennifer Halperin @ 0.75, Devon Wood @ 0.75, Bill Larson @ 0.375, Victoria Cole @ 0.2, and Emily Pinkerton @ 0.125). Between September and May, we regularly have between three hundred and three hundred fifty people in the building on Sunday mornings. However, if we are intending to grow by one-third, then we would expect to have between four hundred and four hundred sixty-five people in the building on Sunday mornings. The rule of thumb that a church requires one full-time equivalent staff person for every one hundred people in the building on Sunday mornings would then suggest that we would need to increase our staff by approximately one full-time equivalent staff position.

There are two major options for providing adequate staff for our growing church.

Option 1: Assistant or Associate Minister. In this option, we would hire an assistant minister or call an associate minister who would devote time primarily toward adult programs, pastoral care, covenant groups, and worship. This option would not prevent us from making minor increases in staffing for other areas of church life.

Many Unitarian Universalist churches with five hundred to six hundred adult members have more than one minister. In some cases, this is a minister of religious education; in other cases, this is an assistant or associate minister. Some of our lay leaders here at First Unitarian Church have stated that we have already reached the point where we need an assistant or associate minister.

Option 2: Non-Ordained Program Staff. In this option, we would provide adequate staff for our church in the near future by expanding existing program staff positions and/or by hiring one or more additional part-time program staff members. We could increase our staff gradually, in accord with our emerging priorities. We might consider becoming a teaching church and working with a full-time intern minister on a regular basis.

B. Capital Improvements, Organ, and Additional Space.

We need to make several capital improvements in the original building. At a minimum, these improvements include: (1) restoration of the third large stained glass window and restoration of other smaller stained glass windows in the Sanctuary; (2) new pew cushions in the sanctuary; (3) new floor covering in the Sanctuary. (Replacement of the floor covering could happen by installing new carpet wherever the old carpet was installed, by installing new carpet in the aisles but not under the pews, or by installing some material other than carpet, such as the material used as Heinz Chapel.)

Additional improvements in the original building might include: (1) installing more attractive ceilings and lighting fixtures in the high school room and the middle

school room, (2) installing a more attractive ceiling the Undercroft Gallery, and (3) refurbishing the kitchen.

Our organ was installed in 1904 and it was modernized in the 1950s. Our congregation has a growing appreciation for the beauty and inspiration that our organ can contribute to our worship services. One organ builder has already offered us a proposal for rebuilding our organ in a manner which would be sensitive to the historic nature of the instrument and would also significantly improve the brilliance, clarity, and tonal range of the sound. We may wish to raise capital funds for this proposal or something similar.

Our classroom building was completed in 1954. It has served us well for more than fifty years. Untold numbers of children have learned about Unitarian Universalism in that building! Yet already by 1990 the Long-Range Planning Committee was advising the congregation not to invest additional money in capital improvements for this building, anticipating that it would soon be replaced with a larger, three-story structure.

We need more space, particularly if we are anticipating that our congregation will grow by one-third. We would make very good use of a large social hall with a commercial-grade kitchen. We would make very good use of additional offices and additional program spaces, including music rehearsal space. We would make very good use of a spacious lobby connecting the Sanctuary and the social hall, a bookstore, a chapel, workspace for volunteers, and perhaps office space for a community organization. If we choose not to replace the classroom building with a larger building, then we need to explore the possibility of purchasing a nearby residential structure and using it for our own purposes, including office space, campus ministry space, classroom space, meeting space, and office space for a community organization. It would be helpful to raise the money in advance so that when a house became available, we would be able to make our purchase promptly.

Some capital projects, such as restoration of the stained glass windows, are quite straightforward. Other capital projects, such as new floor covering, need some research. Still other capital projects, such as refurbishing the kitchen in the original building, depend on other capital projects, for we may not even need to refurbish the kitchen if we decide to construct a commercial-grade kitchen for a larger social hall. And the decision about how we might acquire additional space would require a very detailed planning process, including consideration of the possibility of constructing a “green” building.

Even a quick look around the Sanctuary discloses a obvious and long-standing need to make some major capital improvements to the Sanctuary, including stained glass restoration, new pew cushions, and new floor covering. Yet a more discerning vision would suggest that now would be the right time not only for these rather modest capital improvements, but also for the more ambitious capital projects of rebuilding our organ and constructing or purchasing additional space.

One rule of thumb suggests that for capital campaigns, congregations can raise between three and five times their annual pledged giving. Since our annual pledged giving is nearly \$400,000, we might expect to raise between \$1.2 million and \$2.0 million in a capital campaign. A mortgage could increase the financial resources available to us.

Goal: Provide well-maintained, safe, comfortable space adequate for a congregation of six hundred to eight hundred adults and two hundred to two hundred and fifty children and youth.

Action: Establish a Capital Campaign Committee which will institute a capital campaign. Items to be considered for inclusion within the scope of the capital campaign are (1) making additional capital improvements to the original building; (2) rebuilding the organ; and (3) acquiring or constructing additional space. The Capital Campaign Committee or the Board of Trustees may establish a Building Expansion Committee to make detailed recommendations about how to proceed, in consultation with the congregation.

C. Annual Budget for Staff and Programs.

We will recognize the critical importance of conducting a good stewardship campaign each year, keeping in mind the troublesome effects on morale throughout the congregation when our stewardship campaign falls short of its goal. We will continue the practice of developing a budget well in advance of the annual canvass, and we will establish the practice of project the annual budget two or three years in advance. We will encourage cooperation between the Canvass Committee and the Membership Committee to share membership information so that both committees can work with membership information that is as accurate as possible.

Goal: Strengthen our procedures for providing annual operating funds and encourage a deeper sense of stewardship among members and friends.

Action: Provide the Fellowship Event Committee with a larger budget to be used for bringing together the largest possible number of members and friends of First Unitarian Church for our annual fellowship event.

Action: Devise a sustainable method for ensuring that we have financial pledges from new members at or near the date of membership.

D. Equipment.

We will recognize the increasing importance of having adequate equipment for worship, programs, administration, and building maintenance. We will explore several different ways of providing adequate funds for equipment. We will continue the practice of developing a list of capital projects approved by the Board of Trustees so that prospective donors can direct their gifts in accord with the priorities of church leadership. (Current examples include a set of two timpani drums and stage monitor speakers for the Sanctuary.)

Goal: Strengthen our ability to raise money for appropriate equipment.

Action: Institute the practice of asking all members and friends for modest capital contributions each year, aside from contributions to a major capital campaign and in addition to pledges to the annual budget, to help cover the cost of equipment and small capital projects.

Action: Expand the practice of developing a list of useful equipment approved by the Board of Trustees and encourage prospective donors to purchase these capital items for the church.

Action: Encourage a small number of fundraising events each year with the proceeds going toward the purchase of useful equipment.

E. Endowments.

We will continue to encourage the growth of the General Endowment, the Memorial Trust, the Social Justice Endowment, the Music Endowment, the Campus Ministry Endowment, and the Endowment for Ministry with Children and Youth. At this time, we do not anticipate the need for additional program endowments.

Goal: Create greater awareness among members and friends of how our endowments benefit the congregation. Encourage members and friends to make both major gifts and modest contributions to our endowments.

Action: Establish a Planned Giving Committee.

Appendix: Long-Range Plan from 2001

First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh

Living Our Principles

Vision

As a Unitarian Universalist congregation, we look to affect the larger community as we embrace, practice, and celebrate Unitarian Universalist values. Here in the East End of Pittsburgh, we will contribute to the growth of Unitarian Universalism by making a strong and clear commitment to significant strategic institutional changes that enable us to welcome and accommodate more Unitarian Universalists.

More helping hands will magnify the impact our church community can produce as we intentionally and compassionately serve our fellow members and reach beyond our walls to nurture the physical, mental, and spiritual needs of the larger community.

More seekers within our walls will necessitate, and enable, greater diversity and flexibility to offer worship experiences and religious education choices that nurture to a broad array of interests and to a continuum of spiritual needs. Comfort and convenience of program offerings will be improved to provide an optimal experience for a maximum number of participants.

More pledging members will enable First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh to realize the substantive aspects of our vision and more fully achieve our mission in a fiscally sound, morally responsible manner. Expanded program offerings, generating greater utilization of building capacity and developed with more effective lay leadership, will exemplify good stewardship of our existing physical resources.

Goals

Build Community: Strengthen and broaden our local Unitarian Universalist community.

Nurture Souls: Offer more diverse worship and religious education opportunities.

Cultivate Justice: Expand our collective, visible, effective acts on social justice issues.

Strategy

Your Board of Trustees proposes an overarching strategy of church growth to achieve our vision in pursuit of our stated mission. This plan offers our church a way forward through a size transition, thus enabling us to become a stronger, more vital congregation

capable of promoting Unitarian Universalist religious values more effectively and achieving our three goals.

Our vision consultant, Terry Sweetser, commented that First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh could be classified as an “awkward-sized” congregation. With our current membership of 375 adults, we have chronic challenges matching our available resources with our many opportunities for ministry. Terry observed that congregations with 600 or so adult members find it much easier to meet this challenge. This strategic plan sets a target membership of 600 adults, in accord with Terry Sweetser’s observation, and then works backward to determine what institutional decisions we could make to foster growth in membership.

Program Initiatives

1. Launch more intentional efforts to (a) connect with local students through an organized campus ministry program, and (b) welcome and include young adults within our religious community.
2. Find a way to offer assistance to elderly members of our Church and others with special needs.
3. Reinvigorate our deliberate efforts to create activities that will bring us together, in small groups and sometimes in large groups, offering many opportunities for establishing and maintaining relationships among Church members and friends.
4. Increase visibility with regard to social justice issues, and reclaim our historic place in public ministry.
5. Develop a second weekly worship service that will be different in style from our current worship service, yet will appeal broadly enough to attract a substantial number of people.
6. Frame a more effective structure of lay leadership and ensure fair compensation of our paid employees.

*Drafted by Paul Flora
Adopted by the Board of Trustees and the Congregation in
September and October 2001*