

2020 Vision Statement

Approved by the Board - February 2, 2016
After Receiving Comments From the Congregation

Upon entering the sanctuary in 2020, we see and feel the results from our five years of learning about and embracing the differences among us. Long-time members and friends have stretched their comfort zones and welcomed people with a wide range of spiritual, ethnic, cultural, and economic backgrounds. We are refugees and seventh generation Vermonters; we have different abilities and different gender identities. We are a safe place for people who have experienced deep trauma, including those who experience addiction, homelessness, and mental illness. We all feel equally at home here.

When we talk with one another, people really listen and feel heard. We engage in thoughtful conversations about our most deeply held beliefs and passions. Together we make meaning of the joys and sorrows of our lives. We can disagree and still move forward together.

Many new members of all ages have brought new verve and creativity to congregational life and leadership.

As a congregation, we have engaged in serious study of the underlying causes of violence, poverty, racism, and the climate crisis, and the most effective ways for us to act for justice, peace, and environmental sustainability. We are learning about these issues all the time. Out of our discernment process, the congregation has chosen the ways we are most called, skilled, and positioned to address the needs of our neighbors and our planet, both systemically and directly. In collaboration with nearby churches and organizations, we have diminished homelessness, hunger and incarceration, though there is much yet to be done. Further, many we meet through these efforts now feel welcome in our congregation.

Spiritual practice and spiritual seeking continue to center our community. Music, dance and art enrich our worship. We offer a space for daily quiet meditation. To accommodate our growing numbers, we supplement our main Sunday service with worship at other times and places (such as a half-hour Sunday morning multi-age service and an all-music service). During the summer, after our regular church year has ended, visiting artists, social activists, spiritual leaders, and members conduct services. Our name communicates the fullness of our Unitarian Universalist identity and the richness of our spiritual backgrounds.

Most of us take part in at least one of the broad array of small group discussions, book groups, and classes on subjects ranging from parenting and aging to Unitarian Universalist history, white privilege, and global water resources. Out of this reflection

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and study, there is ongoing feedback to the congregation about practical ways for us to live into our Mission.

We have completed a long-range study of our physical space and accessibility needs, that creatively considered the options of new locations, Sunday morning rentals, and reconfiguration of our building. We are starting to implement the conclusions of the study, and we already have enough space for our growing Sunday school.

As the climate crisis continues, we are recognized in Central Vermont as a source of moral and ethical guidance. We support one another to make the difficult and urgent personal changes necessary to live sustainably. We arrive at church on foot, on bikes, or in carpools. As an integral part of Montpelier's transition from oil dependency to community resiliency, we continue to make our building more energy efficient and to reduce our use of fossil fuels. In all of our decisions as a congregation, we consider carefully what resources of the earth we are using. Each of us, at every age, is grappling with how to act out our understanding that we are part of the interdependent web of all existence.

Each Sunday, we leave worship and return to our homes, our neighborhoods, and our work feeling supported and inspired to be peacemakers, justice-seekers, and loving citizens of our world.