

Dream Team Report

The "Dream Team" interviewed an estimated 40-50 members of our fellowship in the spring of 2018.

The questions asked were:

1. What does our church mean to you personally?
2. What do you like most about our Fellowship?
3. What would you like more of in the near term? - in the longer term?

Not entirely surprisingly, the answers were fairly broad. However, many of the comments seemed to fit into the following categories.

Building/physical space: Comments from approximately 13 people

-Short term

improving the poor acoustics of the downstairs (3 people)

-Long term

a new or re purposed unshared facility with designated classrooms for RE (10 people)

Sunday service: Comments from approximately 17 people

-a variety of suggestions and ways people thought Sunday service might be improved.

Social activities: Comments from approximately 8 people

-a variety of answers about different ideas to gather outside of Sunday service (picnic, circle suppers, hiking group, discussion groups, etc)

Community Service- Comments from approximately 4 people

-Increase ways to give back to community

-More projects that folks can volunteer with (or advertise better the ones that exist already)

Growth/Outreach- Comments from approximately 8 people

-Emphasis on growing the congregation via advertising and 'recruitment' to bring in new members (5 people)

-Exit survey if people leave the congregation

Fellowship operations/member support- Comments from approximately 10 people

-Suggestions surrounding pledging (5 people)

-Better understanding of finances, specifically building fund

-Renew program for transportation services

-Avoid volunteer burnout

Religious Education- comments from approximately 5 people

-growth of children/young families in the congregation (2 people)

-increase outreach to families who are currently in the congregation/better direct communication with parents beyond newsletter/announcements (2 people)

-increase more adult volunteers to connect 'upstairs and downstairs' as well as increase children/youth participation in 'upstairs' services

short term

-engage age appropriate children/youth in social justice programs and volunteer opportunities

-create a more robust Adult RE program

long term

-designated RE classrooms, and nursery (this comment is also reflected under *Building/physical space* category)

Spiritual Growth- comments from approximately 6 people

-All comments are essentially encouraging an embrace of alternative approaches to church (avoid trying to mimic Christian churches)

Detailed Report

We have divided the comments into the following categories:

Building/physical space

Sunday service

Social activities

Community services/community involvement

Growth/Outreach to increase awareness of MCUUF and UU

Fellowship operations/Support to individuals in the Fellowship

Religious education/Family related activities

Spiritual Growth

Building/physical space

Do something about the poor acoustics in the basement of the grange.(3 people) It is difficult for people with poor hearing to hear people in the basement during coffee hour. The noise level is not inviting to new members and it is often difficult to hold a conversation within a small group of people. The noise level may discourage visitors and new members from conversing with and getting to know people.

One of these people suggested that we could get a Chalice Lighters grant to hire a professional consultant to help us improve the acoustics.

Another comment: Improve acoustics downstairs/Create a quiet conversation area/Provide smaller tables for easier to hear conversations

Have our own building (2 people)

A creative effort to find a space that fits the needs of the congregation. Potential joint effort with like-minded congregations in the Gorge (Bethel, Riverside).

Another conversation with 6 people about our own building:

The conversation centered on the idea of having our own church facility. The conclusion was that it is a "chicken and egg" problem:

Our own facility to attract new members, or attract new members (more income) to finance the new facility. Generally, all those in attendance believe now is not the time, but it should be part of our long term planning.

Sunday service

Suggested the possibility of videotaping sermons and streaming them on the Fellowship website if people miss services or want to revisit services they found interesting. A total of 4 people suggested either video or audio recording or in the "near term" a transcript put up on the web.

Would like improvements in our AV systems . Possibility a more permanent setup for the projector system and a more seamless integration with computers when we have services that use the projector.

Add a projector screen to our normal setup orientation with a permanent mount of the projector to integrate AV with services, ie : the ability to project hymns and readings .

More history of the UU sprinkled into services

UU history is boring. Would like less

Better prepared and planned music at the service and/or a choir

Likes all the singing - from singing the children out to hymns to the circle song

More variety at services

Cultivate a more spiritual space - heart opening - heart centered - heart moving moments

Add the opportunity to introduce visitors and friends back into the service (3 people)

Have a yearly memorial service for members and loved ones who have passed away

End Sunday Services on time

At the end of Sunday service the fellowship turns to one another and says Go in Peace

Have outside services.

A second person said: Would like to see a hike or another outdoor activity offered instead of a regular service during nice weather for a departure from conventional services.

Social activities

Would like to have an annual Fellowship picnic. Dan Rowe has offered Rahain to be available for youth or other Fellowship events.

What if we had a map of the Gorge featured somewhere with pins marking locations of members of our congregation. This could give a sense of who we are through where we are, and could help families connect with one another (especially those who are more remotely located).

Start a hiking group

More community building with discussion groups and circle suppers

Have a small discussion group after Sunday service to delve into the sermon topic

Start a forum of guest speakers that could meet before services on Sunday. A way to draw more folk to services

Evening adult discussion groups

MCUUF field trips

Community services/community involvement

Have projects people can volunteer to help with

Create more ways to give to our community

Growth/Outreach to increase awareness of MCUUF and UU

Growth – bring in diversity, including age diversity. More outreach. Thoughtful growth – more capacity to do things.

Grow the congregation.

Would like to see “recruitment” efforts. Some form of outreach to bring in new members so that we have a sustained congregation.

Expand outreach. She was first exposed to Unitarian Universalism at an information booth at a fair. She feels that we should be doing more of this type of outreach. Perhaps this is something that could be asked of all members and friends: “how were you first exposed to Unitarian Universalism?”

Would like us to decide as a congregation whether we want to grow from our current numbers or not (vote?) If we do, he would like to see more aggressive efforts towards advertising/recruitment.

Recruit young people

Have a full time minister

Fellowship operations/Support to individuals in the Fellowship

Survey to ask people why they leave our congregation

Renew program to help people with transportation to services

Provide help with end of life documents (perhaps comment was made before this occurred)

Pledging time can be confusing and clumsy - simplify

Too much repeated pledge stuff in April

Wants a reminder for quarterly pledge obligation

Tell us what the previous year’s pledge was

Remind members that service to MCUUF can be a portion of the pledge

Wants to know what is in the building fund

Remind people of the member contact list. Encourage to add more photos of members

Hopes that we will recognize our capacity for completing tasks when setting out goals. She does not want to see the individuals who volunteer “burned out”.

Religious education/Family related activities

Emphasis on volunteering for R.E. from the “upstairs” people.

Vibrant R.E.

I would like to see more outreach to families with children for RE attendance. Maybe have RE at different days or time to grow RE.

Would like to see more children/young families in the congregation.

Spiritual Growth

- Create ways to dig deeper, get uncomfortable and be challenged
- a place to bring our whole selves- spiritually, physically, emotionally and intellectually to walk our own path TOGETHER as a community
- Opportunities are missed again and again to choose a different path than the traditional church/spiritual//religious well worn path
- create a community where everyone brings their gifts to the group and gives for the good of all - a Sarvodaya approach
- MCUUF has an amazing opportunity to not be the business as usual church and to slowly move toward a fellowship that resists being cut from the same cloth of the Christian experience
- be together in circles, using the trauma informed approaches

in the next 1-2 yrs

- feels she is currently well-staffed for number of kids we are serving
- COA is planned for the fall
- would like to see more volunteers from the fellowship to connect with RE and the kids.
- people tend to church shop in the fall (Sept/Oct), so would like to see more community outreach to bring in more families

- incorporate monthly theme from upstairs
- add RE topic to worship spreadsheet for worship team and RE coordination
- publish RE topic and planned activity for each age group. Younger kids might be more activity/craft based. Older kids more discussion based
- a better hang out space for the kids (this speaks to Alicia's comments about designated classrooms for the different age groups)
- currently the thing my kids like most about RE is the foos ball table but not sure they are getting any spiritually enrichment.

in the next 3-5yrs

- MCUUF led social justice programs and volunteer opportunities for kids based on themes happening upstairs and MCUUF participating social justice events
- inter-connect the care team and RE families to help kids process loss (ex. grandparent, or even a pet)
- develop a more robust Adult RE program. Currently most of RE is focused on youth, but Alicia would love see and facilitate adult RE as well
- create an OLD way of gathering - pre Christian -circles, song, music, reflections

in the next 5-10yrs

- a new or re purposed unshared building for MCUUF . Having designated classrooms, including a nursery, for the different age groups would be a huge help to developing programs