

TPC VISIONING 2/26/06 DATA

INCREASE OUR VISIBILITY AND LOCAL CONNECTIONS

GROWING THE CHURCH (6 cards):

- Growth of the church – more hands, ideas
 - Outreach into the community in a meaningful way that people say “I would like to be a part of that group” or “I understand that group”.
- Provide an open community that welcomes all seekers of truth and beauty (and advertise it!).
- Increase church visibility – Public presence:
 - Decorate church front:
 - Provide spectacle – attract attention to church
 - Theme based or only visual
 - Not over done
 - May be just front message board or use tree
 - Advertise events here (or drum circle)
- Spread the word without proselytizing.
- Community outreach (bring a friend to church).
- An easy sentence (one or two lines) on how to describe UU to people outside the church.
- Church as magnet for those who want to come together to bond, share, encourage, pursuit of satisfactory, worthwhile lives.

GETTING THE UU MESSAGE OUT THERE:

- I would like to see our community educate the larger community as to our shared UU values and principles. (Youth)
- Be a presence in the neighborhood – identify ourselves in community meetings, letters in local papers, etc – not just events.
- Become a known “denomination” - understood, valued, legitimate.
- I would like to see our message as Unitarian Universalists (acceptance, love, tolerance, etc) out in the larger community to help balance out messages from more intolerant religions, e.g. regular articles/editorials in the news from us – indicating that we are a part of this church and what we think/believe.
- Increase our visibility as religious liberals (in the original sense of the term).
Examples:
 - Workshop on speaking in religious terms to the wider society
 - Community outreach to local neighborhoods with forums on religious issues.
 - Presence on church website, articles to local papers, blogs, etc.
 - Idea is to make visible the presence of a liberal religious tradition and push back against the idea that “religious” means Evangelical Christian.

- I would like for this church or the Unitarian church in general to be more vocal about what it stands for, especially when other churches are strongly advocating for one thing or another.
- Share our values and ideas with our community through a Sunday lecture series. (Youth)

PROVIDE UNIQUE PRESENCE AND SERVICE TO IN LOCAL COMMUNITY

- More visibility in local community – peace vigils? Events that draw others?
- Start a community forum – lectures, discussions, on issues of social and economic justice, environment – possible collaboration with neighboring congregations.
- Engage in more community outreach, become more of a presence in the community. With so many church members already engaged in service professions and/or service organizations, it maybe useful just to find out what they are.
- The church should become a strong presence in the West Roxbury community with a focus on issues of importance such as creating a more diverse community.
- TPC become a community that extends beyond our two hours together on Sunday. More activities that brings us together, bringing the community (W.Rox, H.P., Roxbury, and Dorchester) into our house and us into their community. Welcoming of All and All of Welcome.
- Reach out to our local community
 - “Theodore Parker Spiritual Center” (not a church)
 - “Center for Progressive People”
- Outreach to youth
- Open church in afternoons with volunteer staff to help local youth with their homework or other issues
- Drop-in center for youth, especially for music and art, staffed by members
- Use music as community outreach
- Expand into the community. This is very important. It would foster diversity within the church by letting people know we have and we should also become more involved in sponsoring schools and possibly join/ collaborate with them in things like community functions/ activities (parades/ cleanup). Also, associating with other churches is good. Chance to get to root of social issues. (Youth)
- More commitment to see the resources of our community as community resources

CONNECT WITH OTHER CONGREGATIONS AND COMMUNITIES:

- Interchange/ Connection with other UU congregations.
- Communications w/ other UU congregations
- Connection to broader UU world
 - Activities w/ other UU churches
- Communication w/ other churches in the area
- Connecting with other congregations, local, domestic, and abroad.
- Given Theodore P’s importance, I would like this congregation to reach out beyond UU-ism.
- Interaction/ collaboration with other congregations:

- Religious study
 - Community service/ social action
 - Joint worship services
- More diversity. I liked the idea of partnering with another church in Boston and also somewhere else in the world. This would bring opportunities for musical diversity as well.
- Consider intergenerational connections to wider community or other churches, or connecting children, or teens, with their peers in wider community/other churches
- I like the idea of establishing connections between other churches throughout community, country, and world. In connection with more diversity/ meeting different types of people. (Youth)
- Find a “brother” church to share point of view and bring diversity of thought to us. (Youth)
- Sister church in other Boston neighborhood
- Greater connection to community – through sister church, visiting services.
- Energy that goes in to “producing” services is directed outward, church community connects with other communities, possibly through music.
- In the spirit of community outreach, I would like to form on-going relationships in the community, such as
 - A nursing home
 - A sister church with more racial diversity,
 - Volunteer opportunities in the community.
- Stronger connections with other churches – UU and otherwise – TPC is somewhat isolated. (Youth)
- Community outside of TPC, externally practice our mission, sister church
- The idea of a sister church and meeting with other churches outside of Sunday school. (Youth)
- Diversity – I have learned that it is difficult for most white, mostly upper middle class intellectual communities to attract much diversity of members. So, rather than trying to invite diversity here, we could reach out to existing community diversity with a goal of learning from each other, helping in ways *they* want. We need to invite them to share what they can to our community.
 - Possibilities: an urban church/ mosque/ temple with mostly congregants of other race/ culture. (Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries sets these up). Or a “sister” church or community in another country (Central America, Africa, etc).