

2018 UUCSV Congregational Survey

Five years ago, in 2013, our church put together a strategic planning committee charged with helping the board and the congregation set a course for UUCSV for the next five years. To help identify the challenges facing the church and how we as a congregation felt about them, the committee developed a short survey to guide their planning. The board used the survey responses and the 5-year plan to chart our current course. Since then we have accomplished much thanks to the strategic plan and the congregation growing to our present membership size and supporting a full-time minister. Today we are very proud of our success and thank all of you who helped us get to this point in the development of our church community.

It is time to chart a plan for the next five years to guide the board and all of us as we move forward as the loving community we are at UUCSV. The board appointed three people to put together a new survey to help us identify our current issues as a church and their importance as we begin to plan for the near-term future. We again want your input to help us identify these issues and to help guide our thinking and planning going forward.

We invite each of you to participate in this survey below. Each family member old enough to read is invited to respond to these survey questions individually.

GENERAL SURVEY RESULTS and ANALYSES

65 UUCSV people responded to this survey by the cutoff date of Sunday, 2/11/18. This included 49 Members, 12 Friends, 2 Visitors and 2 who did not indicate their relationship to the church. Of these, 22 were men, 39 women, and 4 did not indicate gender. Age ranges checked included 1 person 25-34, 6 between 35 and 54, 10 between 55-64, and the vast majority (46) indicated their age to be 65 or older. Also 2 persons did not indicate their age range.

On the following pages we will first list each actual survey question followed by the results for that question. In this survey there was a mix of limited response option questions and two open ended questions. But even the limited response options had some persons making unprompted open-ended responses. For these limited response option questions, the numeric results in the form of bar charts will be presented first, followed by a summary of any open-ended suggestions for that question.

For the two open ended questions, every response without edit was copied into a separate word document. This document also includes the unprompted responses to the close-ended questions as well. Two independent content analyses were conducted to search for common themes to the responses to the open-ended questions. These two analyses were merged, categories counted, and summarized for each question. Example exact quotes of these more common themes will be presented here. A full list of all the unsorted individual quotes is available separately as an appendix for those who might want to read every individual comment for all the survey questions.

GROWTH

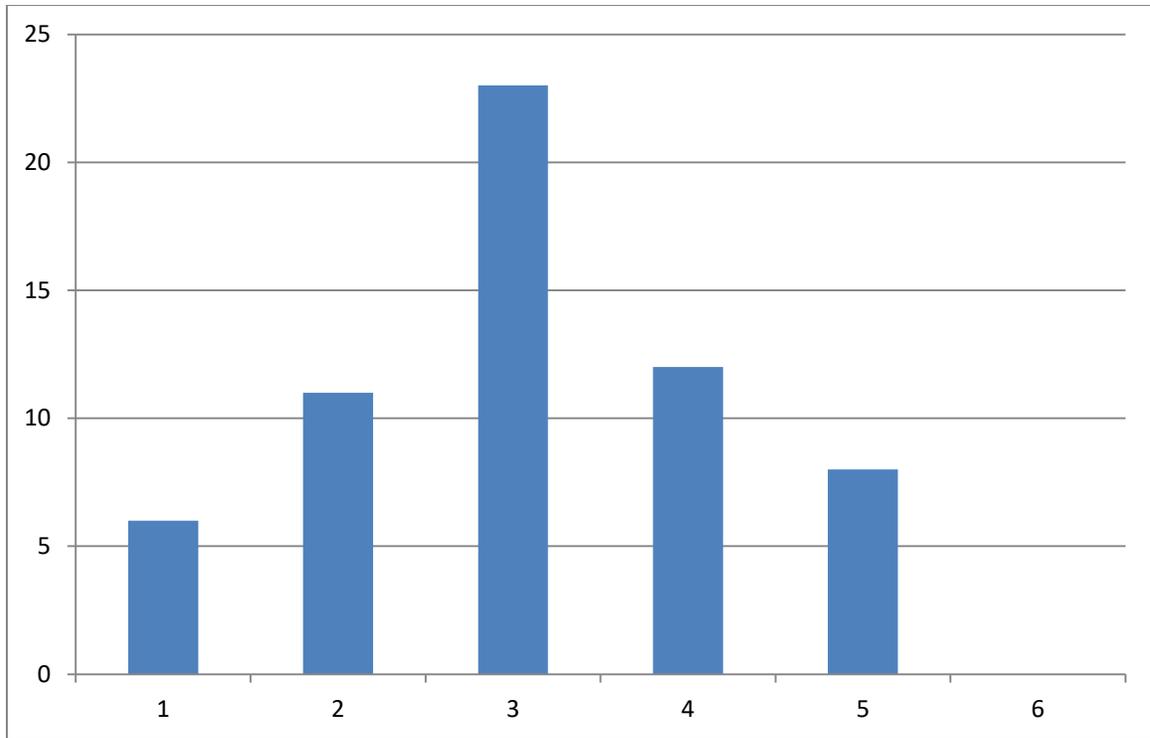
One of the key issues (then and now) is encouraging and managing the growth of our congregation. Congregational growth takes many forms: numbers of members and friends, spiritual growth of each congregant, financial growth of the church, growth in leadership, growth in outreach, etc.

We realize that these growth areas are also intertwined with issues of our physical facility, location, financial health, contributions and services volunteered and probably many other factors as well. Clearly one of the key strengths is the relatively warm caring we all have experienced at UUCSV. This requires our collective effort in maintaining this active caring in our church community as we continue to grow.

1. As you think about where you want our church to be in the next five years, how should we collectively manage our growth? (**Please select only ONE of these possible options.**)
 - ___ a. Manage growth in membership to successfully sustain our current size and current use of our facility and location pretty much as it exists today.
 - ___ b. Manage moderate growth in membership which will likely require us shortly to move to two Sunday morning services each week but keep our facility relatively as is.
 - ___ c. Manage moderate growth in membership and re-orient the seating in the sanctuary 90 degrees to accommodate more seats. This will require some modification of the sanctuary to move the presentation area and some modest financial spending to do this.
 - ___ d. Manage more growth in membership requiring expanding the building on our present site (enlarging sanctuary, kitchen, RE area.) This will require more modification of our physical footprint and consequently more spending to accomplish this.
 - ___ e. Manage more growth requiring the combination of two services, seat switching, and expanding the building (combine b, c, & d above.) This will require the spending outlined in both c) and d) above.
 - ___ f. Manage considerably more growth in membership requiring the purchase of a larger church at another location (and selling our current property). This will require substantially more spending than the other options above.

RESULTS for Q1: As you can see from the bar chart on the next page, only the last option (sell our property and purchase a larger church) had NO responses. Moderate growth expectations were more frequently chosen with Reconfiguring the Seating in the Sanctuary being the most popular among these forced-choice options.

Summary of Responses, Question 1



- Options:
1. (6) Sustain our current size and current use of our facility.
 2. (11) Move to two Sunday morning services.
 3. (23) Reconfigure the sanctuary to accommodate a 90° rotation of seats.
 4. (12) Expand the building significantly.
 5. (8) Do all of 2, 3, and 4 above.
 6. (0) Sell our current property and purchase a larger church.

There were a few unprompted responses to question 1. A few people challenged whether we should “manage” growth at all, rather we should simply make sequential decisions (roughly in the order presented as options) as we grow without attempting to manage our growth. Two other suggestions were:

“If we turn the sanctuary seating 90 degrees, it will create sharper angles to the pulpit.”

“If we grow without going to 2 services, we will need more parking (in NE corner of lot?)”

2. However we choose to manage our growth, we must continue to assure the financial stability of our church. To date we have sustained our financial success primarily on annual pledges we all make to support the operational budget of UUCSV. As we grow, how do we expand our ability to grow financially BEYOND the annual pledges we all make? Below please rank where we should prioritize our collective efforts at non-pledge financing. (1 = highest priority; 6 = lowest priority.)

_____ Renting our building to other users.

_____ Providing fundraising events.

_____ Home hosting of visiting guests and donating the proceeds to the church.

_____ Providing services to the greater community for some \$ benefit to UUCSV:
(music, art, lectures, discussion groups, classes, other ideas?)

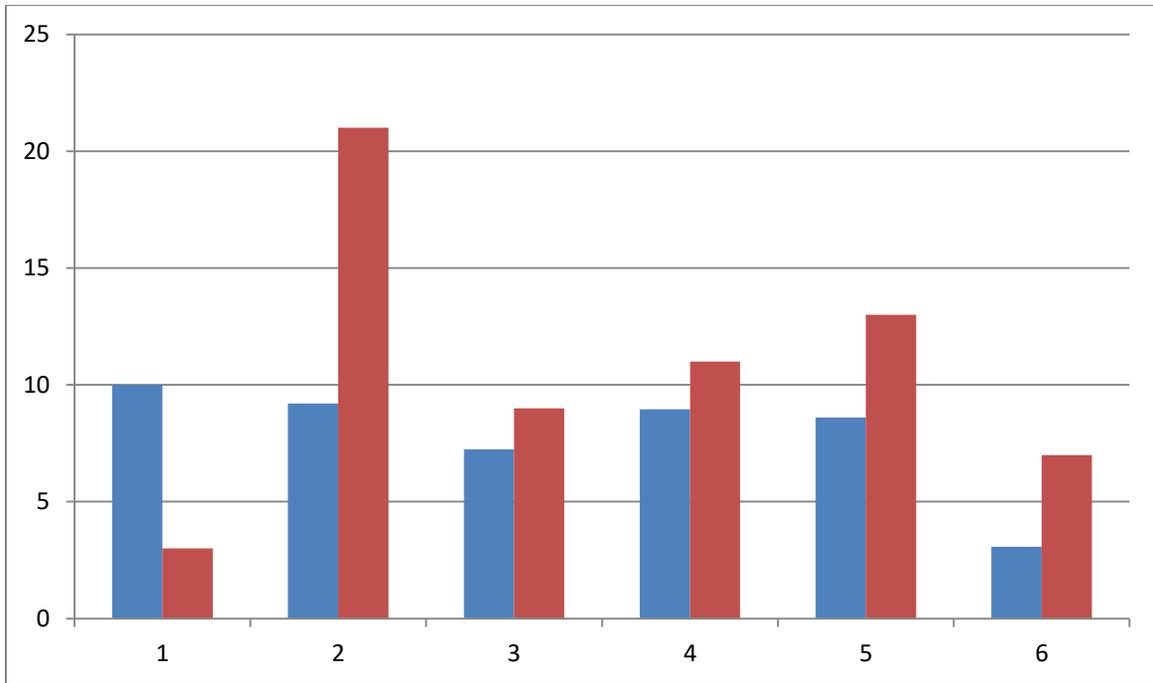
_____ Encouraging greater emphasis on planned giving / including UUCSV in your will.

_____ Other ideas that benefit UUCSV financially? (Please specify): _____

3. In the left margin in survey item #2 just above, please put a large X next to those non-pledge fundraising options that you are PERSONALLY willing to help us do.

RESULTS for Q2 & Q3: The rank responses to question 2 were summed with #1 rank given the most rank points and #6 rank the least. These were then summed across all who completed question #2. Many did not offer any additional “other” ideas and chose not to rank this last option. 10 persons had other ideas to offer and their suggestions are summarized following the bar chart ranks shown in blue in the next chart. We also asked in question 3 which options the respondent would be willing to help us do. The number of “X’s” marked for each option across all the respondents is shown in the red bars in this same chart. It is interesting to compare these two questions: Whereas Building Rental was the highest ranked option, it had the least number of people willing to help us do this (3). In contrast, Fundraising Events, second in rank order, had by far the highest number of people (21) willing to help us do this.

Summary of Responses, Questions 2-3



Relative priority ranking (rank totals ÷ 25)

 Number of people willing to help

- Options:
1. (250, 3) Building rental
 2. (230, 21) Fundraising events
 3. (181, 9) Home hosting
 4. (224, 11) Services to the greater community
 5. (215, 13) Planned giving
 6. (77, 7) Other

The other ideas listed for raising funds for the church specifically included:

4 persons listing different variations on Event Fundraising including 3 kinds of auctions (silent auction, service auction, etc.) and a yard sale.

2 persons suggesting targeted fund raising for construction projects / capital outlays or budgeting operating funds for future capital expenses.

1 person each suggested: reducing expenses (a committee to do this), a detailed suggestion offered on establishing and managing a consignment store, “win the lottery”, and no additional financing efforts are needed.

4. How do we continue to grow in membership size and yet still retain our warm sense of intimacy and being in a loving, caring community? Please share your ideas:

RESULTS for Q4: The open-ended responses to this question were many (some offered multiple specific suggestions) and varied. However, a few major categories of similar responses emerged. We present them here – first their numbers and some example quotes:

22 respondents suggested emphasizing various small group activities:

13 emphasized social gatherings in small groups (for example, re-establishing Round Robin dinners or encouraging discussion groups.)

9 emphasized adult RE or Covenant Group participation.

A few examples of these: “Having classes to explain what UU is with emphasis on making UUCSV their home.” “Continue coffee time and Sunday pot lucks.” “Have more adult education classes, speakers, events.” “Personal invitations to social events.” “Covenant Groups!” “Be more active with racial justice and poverty in particular.” “Bring back Round Robin dinners.”

15 persons suggested focus on making visitors/new members part of our community:

9 helping new people feel welcome and

6 getting new people involved in committees, or other engaging church actions.

A few examples of these: “Continue highlighting newer members in newsletter.” “Continue to introduce selves and chat with visitors.” “Make efforts to greet newcomers and visitors.”

4 respondents suggested we just continue to be our best authentic selves. An example: “Attract and retain members as we always have: by being authentic individuals. Most are warm, caring committed people of integrity. Why should that change if there are more of us?”

4 respondents suggested we use our physical space to promote intimacy by replacing pews with chairs, remodeling the front entry (portico?), maintaining our existing small physical space and move anything in the sanctuary to get more seating.

3 persons suggested maintaining the “Joys and Concerns” moment in our services.

There were some individual suggestions to question 4 that didn’t combine well into any other category. These were: “Occasionally, have a representative from each committee or group address the congregation for a few minutes during announcements. This person would explain what his/her group does and offer to speak to any interested parties during coffee hour.” “Get everyone involved (old as well as new members.)” “Congratulate ourselves periodically on our warmth.” “Continue to have a strong Congregational Care Committee.” “Organize summer classes for kids.” “Have two services.” Also, “Don’t have two services.”

4 responses didn’t really address the questions of maintaining intimacy: “Attract new members through outreach activities.” “Recruit more members from Asheville.” Recruit members from among new Black Mountain residents.” “Aim for more diversity in ages.”

Finally, 3 persons challenged the validity of the question: “We probably won’t grow much more.” “We can’t grow and maintain intimacy.” “Don’t assume that large means less warm and caring.”

PARTICIPATION AT UUCSV

5. Active participation in groups, committees, social events, and other ways beyond the Sunday morning services makes for a richer church experience and helps develop that sense of community that we all seek. Many opportunities at UUCSV exist to become involved. As we move forward in the next 5 years, where collectively do we need to encourage more participation and emphasis in these opportunities? First rank the top five areas we need to collectively emphasize more to the LEFT of each item.

(1=highest priority, 5= least priority among the top five.)

6. Then to the RIGHT of each item, put an X in any areas that you personally would like to become more involved at UUCSV.

- | | |
|--|--|
| _____ Adult Education/Classes _____ | _____ Strategic Planning Committee _____ |
| _____ Board/Governance _____ | _____ Sunday Service Associates _____ |
| _____ Building/Grounds/Aesthetics _____ | _____ UUA Denomination Participation _____ |
| _____ Children’s Religious Education _____ | _____ UUCSV Round Robin Dinners _____ |
| _____ Choir / Music / Audio _____ | _____ Other ideas? Specify below _____ |
| _____ Communications/Newsletter _____ | _____ |
| _____ Congregational Safety _____ | |
| _____ Covenant Groups _____ | |
| _____ Environmental Justice _____ | |
| _____ Finance/Canvassing _____ | |
| _____ Habitat for Humanity Build _____ | |
| _____ Hospitality/Sunday Potlucks _____ | |
| _____ Membership/Greeting _____ | |
| _____ Memorial Garden _____ | |
| _____ Personnel / Staff Committee _____ | |
| _____ Social Action Committee/Events _____ | |
| _____ Social / Discussion Groups _____ | (Includes men’s group, women’s group, lunch bunch, Friday Fling and other social groups at UUCSV.) |

Results for Q5 & Q6: First an apology. When listing all the known activities and committees at UUCSV for this question, we neglected by mistake the “Congregational Care Committee.” This is certainly a vital team at UUCSV and its omission on this list was noticed by one of the respondents. Thanks for catching our mistake and we apologize. The CCC team will certainly remain a vital role within our church community going forward.

The bar chart on the next two pages summarizes ranking of the top 5 activities on the emphasis that should be given to each activity (in blue) and the number of people indicating a personal willingness to help (in red) for each of these 22 categories of activities at UUCSV. The five highest priorities of where we should collectively emphasize our efforts (question 5) are in order with the highest / most number of rankings first:

1. Adult Education Classes
2. Children’s Religious Education
3. Social / Discussion Groups
4. Membership Committee & Greeting
5. Social Action Committee/Events

Note that while Social / Discussion Groups was third in this collective priority, it had the highest number of persons (14) willing to help in this area. Contrast this with our #2 collective priority, Children’s RE, with only 5 persons putting a personal X indicating he/she was willing to help in this area.

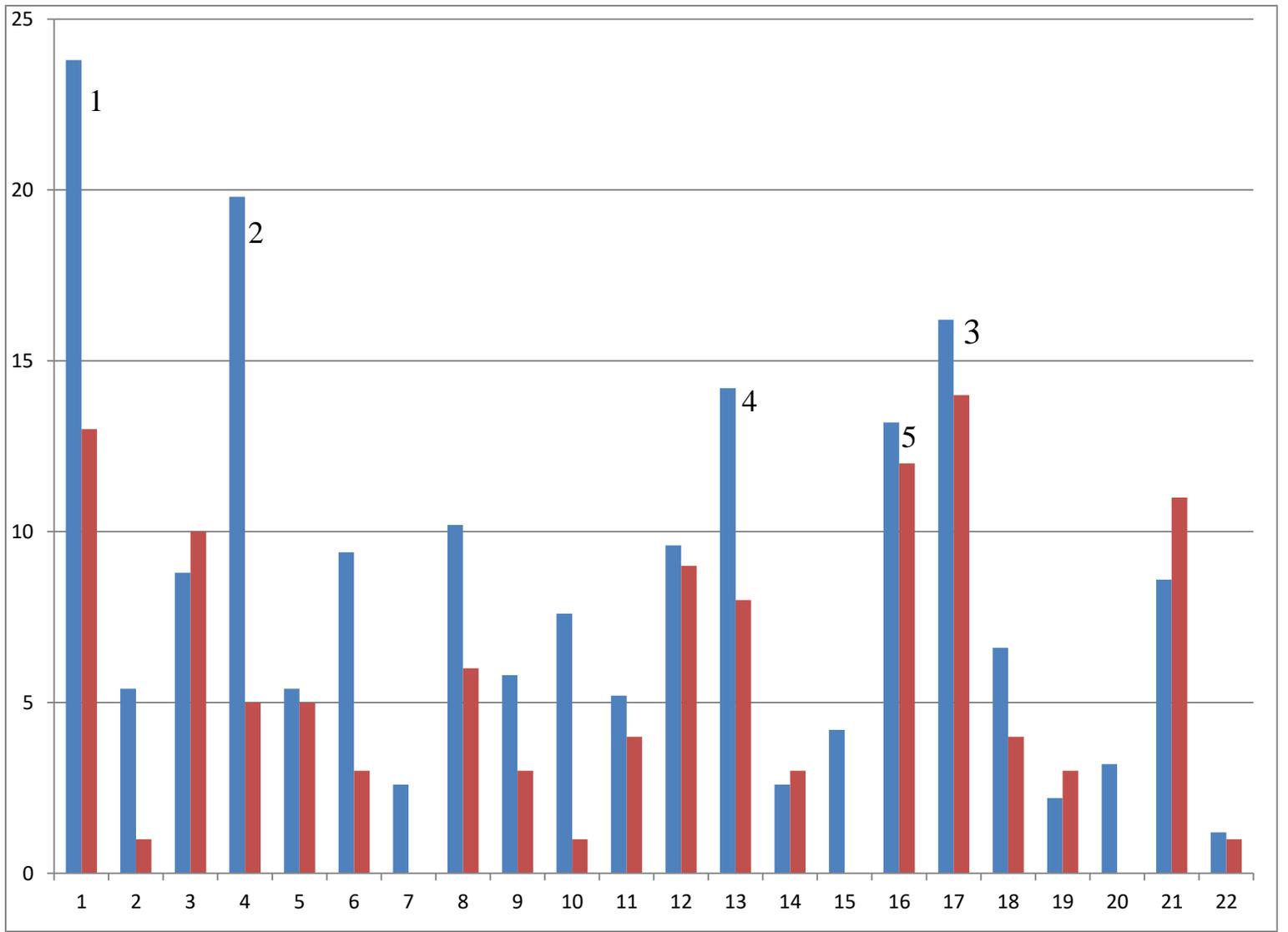
But also observe that every category was at least listed as someone’s top 5 priorities – meaning that to at least one respondent it deserves more emphasis by our church community in the next 5 years. So, in some respects, there is a variety of interests in both priority and in willingness to help across all of these various ways to participate and engage in UUCSV.

Some unprompted but interesting comments came here at question 5/6 and at the end of the survey. These unedited comments were:

“Whole question 5 kind of an artificial choice.”

“Boxed items (options 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13,19) are very important functions that are currently in good conditions (so far as I know.) They don’t currently need “more participation and emphasis” but they deserve ongoing vigilance and support. If there are weaknesses in any of these functions (contrary to my impressions), then they should get high priority.”

“5.-1.: This is an acknowledged non-priority of the church and is the biggest thing missing for me in this congregation. Yet I think a meaningful adult RE program may be beyond our current capabilities. If I could off-load most of my other responsibilities, and had a few partners, I MIGHT be willing to participate.”



Summary of Responses, Questions 5-6

 Relative need ranking (rank totals ÷ 5)	 Number of people willing to help
1. Adult RE/classes (ranked 1) (119, 13) (ranked 2)	12. Hospitality/Sunday potlucks (48, 9)
2. Board/governance (27, 1)	13. Membership/greeting (ranked 4) (71, 8)
3. Buildings/grounds/aesthetics (44, 10) (ranked 5)	14. Memorial garden (13, 3)
4. Children's RE (ranked 2) (99, 5)	15. Personnel/Staff committee (21, 0)
5. Choir/music/audio (27, 5)	16. Social Action (ranked 5) (66, 12) (ranked 3)
6. Communications/newsletter (47, 3)	17. Social/discussion (ranked 3) (81, 14) (ranked 1)
7. Congregational safety (13, 0)	18. Strategic Planning Committee (33, 4)
8. Covenant groups (51, 6)	19. Sunday Service Associates (11, 3)
9. Environmental justice (29, 3)	20. UUA Participation (16, 0)
10. Finance/canvassing (38, 1)	21. Round Robin dinners (43, 11) (ranked 4)
11. Habitat for Humanity (26, 4)	22. Other (6, 1)

“5.-5.: As much as we all love Linda, I feel that we are relatively behind the times in the quality of our worship services, especially as it relates to use of media and music. I would like to see Linda’s hours expanded so she could stimulate a wider variety of music in our services. I’d like the Choir to perform more than once a month, or to supplement the Choir with another kind of ensemble.”

“5.-6.: This is just an editorial comment. I think our administrative support services should be expanded and could well include production of the monthly Newsletter (if we want to continue to have one) and routine updating of our website. I would like to be LESS involved personally.”

“5.-20.: Just a personal preference of mine; don’t think it’s a common concern; not a priority for my own time. Not a top-5 issue overall, I guess.”

“5.-22.: Leadership development: Not just for the Board, but throughout the congregation, Minister and on down. I feel a lack of confidence in our ability to rally around a common vision, and to strengthen interconnections among our many moving parts. Along with this should go vast improvements of our use of technology for effective management. We do not have the skill set needed in any of our present staff, which results in individual volunteers taking ownership for disparate tasks, often with unfortunate side-effects and inefficiencies.

“We have more numbers of older people than you might realize. Things can change rather dramatically as you get older.”

“Adult and Youth Programs - Sunday 11 am • Nursery / Preschool care provided • Beverages & Snacks After the Service * Religious Education Classes Offered: Elementary – Young Adult”

“Cancel the Memorial Garden.”

It is our hope that this survey and these interesting results will well serve a new strategic planning team to help us develop a new 5-year plan for UUCSV going forward.

Sincerely:

Jim Carillon, Board Member

Tina Rosato, Willing Volunteer

David Wells, Board Chair