



USNF Sheltering Flame Service Chalice Summaries

Our community gathered at one multi-generational service to reflect and listen to what is important to us. One hundred and seven members, friends, and newcomers of all ages gathered together to envision our future. We put our ideas onto index cards and then sorted those cards into six chalices that represent areas of congregational life together. These pages contain the words from each card (as best we could interpret the handwriting!) organized by chalice.

In gratitude,

The members of the UUPP (Unitarian Universalist Planning People) Task Force – Craig Dreeszen, Kris Holloway, John Bidwell, Jay Indik, Pamela Wicinas, Laurie Rackenberg-Loisel.

Chalice Names

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VALUES AND PRINCIPALS

At UU I've learned that even others with very similar values can also be quite different. Thus, I've learned more tolerance.

Hate to Lose: The music. Open forum of testimony expression at the pulpit.

Sources of inspiration; Small Group Ministry: thought provoking values clarification.

Hate to Lose: The connection that develops during Small Group Ministries—the COA experience

Listening to Victoria AND to Janet.

Teaching 5th grade (I think or maybe 4th?) in RE about different cultural festivals from around the world i.e. Christmas, Diwali, Hanukkah, Feast of St. Lucia, Native American Thanksgiving, etc. – I felt the children and myself connecting to a greater spirit which embodied the UU principles.

What is important to me is that we recognize and value wisdom from different sources.

Study the life and philosophy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Viktor Frankel.

As a newcomer I am pleased to be welcomed by so many today. Follow up is important, on both sides. I need to become involved. A specific action is needed by the newcomer AND those who are here already. Sometimes it is best to let the new ones come to you— Sometimes it is better to reach out. It is hard to tell.

I feel very good about the things that the UU does to support those less fortunate in the community and hope that we continue those traditions (and perhaps even enhance them) in the future. Examples: sharing our offering, collections for the Food Pantry, serving meals to those in the shelters, etc.

UU History – provides connections to past and present social justice concerns.

Sources of Inspirations: Music, Music, Music for the heart and healing. All kinds of music. (wonderful singer song writer who came a few years ago and did the whole service (man).

I would hate to lose sight of our UU transcendental protestant based roots.

I was inspired by the COA principles services. How about periodically asking for volunteers to talk about their favorite principle.



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We agree on a formal covenant. Promises we make to each other==how we are with each other.

Congregational policy. The annual meeting and other congregational meetings should be places of open discourse and debate. Produces involvement. Antidote to passivity.

We could find more ways to bring art here. Music, dance, visual arts etc.

UU principles for community provide valuable structure re: parenting.

I went to the MA State House and spoke in favor of repealing the law against abortion.

Exploring big questions and searching for truth of meaning during worship/sermons.

A simple, inspired message within a Sunday service filled with song, music, and the kindness and hospitality of others is really all I need.

Multi Gen Services leave me feeling nourished in ways that other services don't. I think it's because of the storytelling aspect. The messages are so easily accessible and relatable.

Learning and Growing: Being _____ (?) to think about important things outside my own experience.

RE is something we value and would hate to lose.

Working with women of all ages and experiences, sharing their knowledge.

After 9/11 we had a special congregational meeting. The minister at the time did not get into the politics and causes of this tragedy. But instead invited us to think of MLK's message that "hate begets hate"... and That love is the only antidote.

One of thousands holding hands surrounding a nuclear power plant in Colorado in protest for it being there.

Imparting UU values to the children in RE classes feels like I am investing in a better future.

Creating a summer service based on celebrating and honoring the earth – a deep connection to the interdependent web of life.

One year there was a wonderful pagan based service held in a circle at Acadia. It was powerful and I would like to see more like that.

Sitting together listening to music



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I have a UU app that inspires me throughout my day when I need a jolt of wisdom.

Music and poetry in worship.

Sitting down and eating together is really wonderful, like the breakfast before service this morning. It gives you something to “do” while meeting new people or getting to know people better.

I am called to my higher self when I actively welcome both old and new people and when I see others doing this too.

Feeling connected: by me long and short term friendships here.

I’m thinking about a time at least a dozen years ago when I was overcome by the beauty of the music. I left the Great Hall and was sitting on the steps to downstairs crying. Everything was up in that moment: sleep deprived with a new baby, new work, remembering miscarriage, loss of my father—it was all up in that moment. A woman from the congregation came up to me there, sat down beside me and held me while I cried. She didn’t probe or push for an explanation. She just loved me through the moment. A complete stranger—we had never spoken—opened her heart to me and shared my sorrow so that when I stood up I felt lighter – more able to go on.

Feeling nourished: The friends I have made here.

Feeling Nourished: The UU experience is there for the taking. Those who are involved know it every time they come here.

In my own life having and raising children has challenged me to think beyond myself and make me look for higher purpose and meaning.

Feeling incredibly nourished last December at the Services of Remembrance which Jane conducted, while it snowed gently outside and the world outside and the world inside were both quiet and one.

I feel nourished when I am with others who share their ideas and beliefs for me. This has happened during summer and other lay led services through hearing and participating with youth in their worship, in Small Group Ministries, and in some adult education experiences.

I wish for low-pressure, non-time-intensive, yet meaningful ways for newcomers to really connect to the congregation. I keep coming because I am invested, but when I was new I resisted the idea of taking more time and energy. Those 2 needs are in conflict. I want to find a bridge between them to bring people in.

Being able to trust each other’s intentions



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Active social actions in nature (kayak, ski, hike) to meet new people

Weeknight Worship

Dec. vespers—quiet music and readings
Quarterly soulful sundown (Friday night?) services.
Regular sharing of poetry.
Adult Ed. that deepens our connections and inspires us.

I was called above and beyond my comfort and energy levels to help lead us through our transition to a settled minister. I think it was my “high self” that got me through it even when it was too much to bear comfortably.

Knowing we are always here to stand for our values: a place of refuge.

Called to higher self: Called a neighbor who had been nasty to me.

Felt nourished: What I would hate to lose—people that come regularly (been in my mind lately) So after three “misses” I email the folks I hadn’t seen and they were thrilled that “someone cared” I want others to feel they can do that and then to act!!!

Covenant: I felt supported when I was ill and when my wife was ill

Hospital visits
Meals brought to us
Company to share time with for comfort and “pep talks” to inspire

Sermons

Invitations offered by our services to feel and think more deeply with more nuance and more openness about what it means to live in right relationships with the world and one’s self

In the 70s, I guess, at a public rally in Pulaski Park my husband and I were interviewed about the law/treatment of gays and we both spoke on the radio about the issues. That time—work and housing both subjects to general discrimination. We said that it was wrong and foolish.

Music that goes beyond classical—speaks to different people/diversity.

More connection to Rev. Bush—feels removed.

Respect even for those we disagree with

Knowing each other’s gifts – creative opportunities – music, art and loving actions.

Feeling Nourished:



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The communion of Sunday service

It was special and meaningful to participate with the kids

Teaching RE

Helping COA class – i.e. spaghetti dinner

I had a small part in the beginning of influencing and interpreting my principals to the next generation.

Grow an expectation of each family that is able to hosting a coffee hour. Families could sign up as pairs. I feel this would help people feel more a part of this place! I heard of a congregation with this expectation and it worked well for them. “Feeling Nourished.”

Coffee Hour

I dream of our society being more outspoken about climate change.

Working with different age groups to expand belief and understanding – projects, teamwork

Experience – last week, reaching out as a welcome presence to first-time visitors

Value—deepening our ability to be a truly welcoming community – beyond physical welcoming to transformational, radical welcoming that changes both those welcomed and those who offer welcome. To do more of this we need to deepen our interconnectedness and focus more on a shared experience of transformational into a community that lives our shared values in deep and personal ways.



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COVENANT CONNECTION & COMMUNITY

Coffee hour or weekly meet that is geared toward adults in their 20s

We have felt most inspired by the musical selections & pieces played during the service as well as the philosophical passages and services.

I value most that Janet is our minister, and that our congregation is growing with the addition of more and more vital active people. I hope we will add more and more opportunities to interact and get to know each other in many different ways, doing things together.

Reaching out to and personally inviting people to join committees—great forums for connection, community, creativity – and thing about the learning and growth of the whole community.

It feels good when someone says hello to me on Sunday and seems to care about how I am.

The connection and community is what keeps me coming even though my kids are done with RE

Co-thinking

I love having gatherings here, even when I can not attend

Our congregation's covenant can be furthered by working together in small groups—committees working to solve problems with mutual significance. What about new kinship circles? Sharing of ideas in new contexts.

Small group ministry

Non-judgmental: stance of respect, curiosity, connection and hope

I felt nurtured when I started going to the Small Group Ministry at a congregation I had just joined and there was food-soup, stew—at the meetings. There was an acknowledgment that our bodies are souls are connected, and nurturing one helps nurture the other. The feeling was one of being taken care of –of warmth and fullness.

Providing food, gloves, mittens, was a great way to care for others and improve the world around us.

Games, sports – when a group comes together for shared goal and must step out of their comfort zone.



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Called to higher self: Sermons often provide nourishment (whether by minister or lay people.)

Empowerment and hope when the weight of the troubles in the world and at home feel just too much.

Often sermons and services help me grapple with the distress I feel about the state of the world.

Aging congregations: We used to have large-print orders of meeting available for Sunday a.m. Doing this again would make it easier for those of us with aging eyes to concentrate on the service instead of on our difficulties in seeing.

There must be other ways to be more inclusive in regard to our older members. I just haven't thought of all of them.

When my children were tiny and life was complicated, UUs really helped us out with food, support, etc.

I dream of having one service and I believe that this will strengthen us.

Past Experience: Welcoming as a new comer.

Spiritual Connection: Pagan Values—Our connection to the earth through sermons and music.

Convenient Connection & Community: Keep a strong congregational care commitment.

Foster stronger connections between congregants by organizing small (6-8 people) pot-luck dinners hosted by volunteers, with groups randomly selected from those expressing interest.

More lay participation in services would help us to get to know each other.

Don't mind having longer service if there were more to say in a sermon—for instance a guest speaker(s) added another dimension/voice to the minister's sermon. One service would make this easier.

We don't have any means of learning about the life events and needs of members now. Pulpit 'hold in our hearts'? I don't like Joys & Concerns but we need to learn of each other's needs.

"Critical Mass" I feel the greatest connection to the society during all ages services. WE need as many people as possible in the Great Hall.



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We need to harness the entire congregation during/after the service to work on important projects

Ideas for future: How can I maintain connection without participation in committee work? Too many constraints on my time to be involved in this way at this point in time. How can leaders help with this?

Creating a network with other UU societies to help each other's friends/families out. For example, someone who has an aunt that lives in another town/state—we contact a UU society ear there and add that person to the "care list" And others contact our congregation for their friends/families here and nearby. Helping out and expanding.

Hosting and attending service auction events. Connecting in people's homes

To return and remember the journey. To be known and to know. To be held and to hold. To grow and help others grow. To challenge and be challenged. To love and be loved.

The ongoing experience of being afforded opportunities to discover the profound satisfaction that comes from making a personal contribution to a meaningful shared activity.

Working with others for a better world: This is probably the most satisfying work I can do. Helping someone else or a group of people is "where it's at".

I arrive for service and look around. I recognize many faces. I can recall getting to know each one of them in some more intimate interaction in the past, whether at a social engagement, or a committee or working on a short term project or event. Those past experiences have built the connection I feel now as I look out across the congregation.

Could we find even more ways to bring people together in small groups for deep and enriching conversations?

Feeling of vibrancy

I wish we could share our religious beliefs ore and be able to actively listen with tolerance to each other about what we believe .

Want to know the youth better—over food is always good. General gathering – maybe a speed dating evening between youth and adults (not regularly involve) that would be cool!!!

I really appreciate the welcoming caring spirit of the congregation. This was particularly significant for e while experiencing major medical challenges. People continually asked, "how are you doing and what can we do to help?"



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Freely/spontaneous support (meals and visit) during illness

Singing together, as a metaphor or model for committee work.

Helped to tend a community garden. We planted & watered & harvested. Food was donated to Survival Center.

Joys & Concerns: a way to know each other issues – shared by minister as written by individuals

Single service 10:00 am

Recollection of the powerful gift of support and concern we received from this community during a period in our lives when we were dealing with the life threatening illness of one of our children.

The first day I walked in and cried and cried and felt like I had found a spiritual home – my emotions longing for that. And so, I come, and sit, whenever I can.

Getting support for a particularly painful emotional experience

Lay-led services that invite spiritual connection with other congregation members and shared from areas of expertise among us.

Experience –Trying to overcome my desire to avoid the challenges of being in a relationship with someone, to respond with welcome to this person's needs. Value—connection, and community especially when it is hard. To do more—cultivate generosity of spirit and what it means to be called to our higher selves.

In times of loss or uncertainty, this is always a place of comfort – like family. Support-love-caring

Organize a sewing circle for newcomers breakfast.

I would like to see more organized adult education.

I remember my daughter's naming ceremony years ago and I value the community's welcome that offered them and us.

First Fridays

I believe moving to one service would help strengthen our sense of community.



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Calling and checking in on members who have not been at services for 2,3 or 4 weeks

Helping an elder off with their coat or similar simple interaction with elder members.

Leading and working with ___ people and a lay led service--a high point.

More time to get to know others socially-- Maybe a Sunday of all community _____. I am tired of finding out about people at their memorial services.

Willingness to be vulnerable

We should incorporate people who live as singles as equally valued members of USNF

We should have a bereavement support group.

Have we talked about community enough? Are we, in practice, a beloved community, different from other kinds of organizations?

Serving meals with youth group

Community greeting: Do this right after announcements, before prelude. Doing it later in the service disrupts the flow and the congregation has to "re-settle" into the service.

One of my UU highlights was taking the Welcoming Congregation course many years ago. I hope more new people can take it during the coming year.

I would like to see us return to one service as long as the RE program can manage with one set of classes.

How about bringing back the once-a-month brown bag lunch with the minister?

I would like to investigate how more young families can be attracted to USNF, since I hear that the RE attendance is significantly reduced.

Participating on the worship committee years ago. Fostering an experience of spiritual growth and connection.

A welcoming person in coffee hour or in the pew

I imagine a spiritual home that provides a net and comforting space for everyone and their broken places.

I found great nourishment in a gathering of people reflecting on a lost loved one during the holiday season



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If possible move toward one morning service at 10 am to bring the community together. This results from the good feeling when we are together.

Learning how to talk together and actively listen when we do not agree is emotionally high situations.

A congregation that feels more unified. A way hold us as a single service in our building.

Becoming a welcoming congregation lifted us to a new plane. Extending our ability to love each other.

I would like to see an active children's choir

I like being part of a multigenerational community. It's good for old folks to keep meeting and participating with new younger folks and vice versa.

Accepting people who are not universally accepted.

Finding so many kind and nice people in one place.

Joining leadership—encouraged by others who saw qualities I was not aware of. Growing in my faith and life skills from that experience.

Wish for a congregation that was inclusive. Where all voices are valued. Where caring is in words and deeds.

The Welcoming Congregation opened my heart and brought new understanding in a very deep personal way.

Teaching COA as a team – each person had an important role—all vices valued—we had fun—felt a part of a community.

When I as in college I felt cared for and nourished by my close friends. We were there for each other and still are forty years later. Ideas: people who walk into the society for the first time feel they are valued and that they matter and are cared for.



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RENEWAL

A time in the society I learned and grew and was called to my higher self was teaching kindergarten in RE. I was inspired by the children's openness and in awe of my responsibility as a teacher

Being a mentor: watching my mentee grow

How to make RE a more meaningful enjoyable experience?

Kids in RE—learning the values I want them to have and to think, explore safely

Training for RE teachers needed – other than being given the manual curriculum. If felt lost.

RE and Community: Children feeling at home here, like it is their place.

I dream of hosting a college-aged group here. Also young adults.

Welcoming RE that does not scare away new families

Vitality in adult education curiosity and energy

Hearing my kids and their friends read their credos

RE helping out children to learn to be liberal and green.

Called to a higher self: practice and reading

I would love to see more families with small children in the congregation.

Showing young families our welcoming and wonderful community.

Mentoring youth has provided me with opportunities to learn and grow and has called me to my higher self.

My dream: We extend our COA model to the larger community, bringing in youth form outside the 'society'. We need the next generation and we must make a space for them that matches their needs rather than our own.

Looking back from the future: working on the RE council helped me to understand the needs of our children and families and have gave me the vehicle to facilitate programs that make a difference



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I feel nourished by the sermons and the music.

A UU preschool in the Round House for revenue and community connection.

A relevant, well-organized RE program for children. The congregation's children to gain a better understanding of the mission and principles of our society and UU heritage

A simple, self-sustaining RE program is a goal.

Separate COA and OWL

I hope more families make space to do social justice and USNF activities together. This has benefited my own family and grown children.

We might consider finding ways to interact with people who don't take UU principles for granted – holding debates? Hosting speakers we disagree with? We've lost sight of the radical power of our ideas...

Working with youth and being inspired by their ideas. Helping each other to grow in leadership and faith. Helping them find themselves and myself to grow

Youth group for our daughter.

Joseph Campbell series was spiritually illuminating for me.

Would like to see more intellectual rigor in sermons, ___ _ talks. Guest speakers?

Calling to my higher self: It is always interesting that I feel 'complete' until something new (spiritually) knocks on my door and I realize how un-enlightened I have been!

I think of an experience several years ago, listening to and watching a series of talks and films about Africa offered here. The presentation was eye-opening and soul-opening, a shared learning that widened my knowledge and understanding. I would like to see more opportunities for similar experiences

Learning & Growing: I find learning new things very empowering because it helps me to feel I can meet challenges placed before me.

RE teaching our children.-- they are important enough to spend time with.

RE/Renewal: Lighter demands on parents so they have time/energy to participate with other adults.

Affect a new younger ___ of people through mixing up services. Keep each one unique instead of falling into a pattern. Don't be afraid to switch things up.



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Learning and growing: Guided mediation: Meditating with others is a source of quiet energy. Would love to take part in meditations to be followed by sharing.

Family breakfast was a wonderful opportunity to learn about others and grow friendships

Understanding fair share contributions

Ample opportunities to know each other.

Hear about regular dinners—maybe more notice of them to the general congregation if available or a newer style, not quite First Friday...smaller group?

Performances! Concerts! Art exhibits!

Insights about life experiences from others.

Book groups, evening adult ed.

Adult RE: Short, less once-a-week time commitment. for one-2 short seminars.

The dedication of our children

I could hate to lose: Greg Hayes, Janet Bush, UU building, RE program, youth & adult choirs.

Working with others in service is rewarding to me. I'm not very social in large gatherings, so having a 'job' helps me feel a sense of belonging.

Have a gleaning trip (or similar) for adults too!

Learning how church organizational development works.

Tap into college students. Provide community to UU students far from home communities – Friday dinners (when campus food service weak), social action projects with other students around UU principles.

Adult Learning: Spiritual journaling that Janet taught last year (or before that)

An Adult's Artist's Way group. Participants read the book and do the program over a period of time, meeting regularly. A spiritual art experience. Fits all for prompts in my opinion.



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SACRED ROOTS

Making or exceeding a monetary goal.

I'm new so I have no previous experience here. I love this building, but to me it says "traditional." It does not say new ideas, new beginnings. I don't think there is anything to be done about that. This is just a sense.

New ideas: Change the configuration of the Great Hall to allow for the possibility for us to interact with one another.

Our deep rich innovative history as a religion. We were the first to stand up for what is right before others dared to give voice.

A building, or annex to our building that provides more space for non-worship gathering and for RE.

Green the building.

Our beautiful sanctuary with Tiffany windows is a sacred place for me. But I would like to see the alter area changed to accommodate more non-traditional forms of worship.

Do we need to be one full vibrant service instead of 9:15 and 11?

I look forward to a time where we have great facilities to support –social activities, meeting space, and religious education.

We need a bigger, better suited space – maybe a satellite campus. Take over one of the old catholic churches.

Understanding that taking care of our building is greater than insuring that it works. Rather it can be a vehicle to further our mission. E.g. Drawing in people, creating green systems (solar, etc., non-fossil fuel heat, etc.)

Robust funding for staff and programs

Live within budget.

I look forward to a time where we can fairly compensate the staff, financial, for their contributions to the society.

Dreams: Long-term budget stability and fair pay for all staff.



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Great call configuration change idea: one center aisle and 2 wall aisles. Can even use existing pews by just switching ends around. That, together with opening up altar area, will feel more welcoming.

Stronger development plan

- foundation
- fundraising

Staff o booth (or something) at art fairs, festivals (for UU jewelry, etc., donations) or ways to get out at different communities

Nice house you got here, in a nice town. Could there be ways it might speak out more about the message that resonates within.

We are as generous with our \$ as we are with our hearts.\\Figure out a way to raise funds outside the existing congregation. So new funds come in, not just from existing sources.

Listening to a particularly moving sermon.

Pay our staff a fair wage.

Our interim minister ...(can't read the rest of the card)

I wish for: A congregation where everyone is committed to stepping forward when needed to keep us viable into the future, where many, not a few, are willing to step into leadership.

Interviewing members—hearing others' ideas/desires for the society

Signing the book. First time I 'joined' a religious movement

Serving the society on the council and board—going beyond my comfort zone, being more visible. Assisting in the society's functioning.

Inspiring people to dig deeper financially and in giving time. How?

Consider repainting Great Hall—pale sage (to go with carpet, upholstery and windows) or the pale blue with white trip of 20 years ago. Lavender feels uncomfortable (even though I like lavender.)

To be seen as strong and having something to offer yet deeply wounded and in pain.

Making connections or placing people together to improve career, education, and security.

I love the architecture of the great hall (thought I'd prefer not to have lavender walls.)



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SACRED ACTION

I would urge the UUNF to adopt a rule that every time a forum is held on some current topic, speakers on both sides should be present. For example, if the UUNF is sponsoring a speaker from the Palestinians, a speaker for the Israeli side should be found. Another example, a forum on global warming policies should have speakers from both sides, e.g. people in support and opposition to the Kyoto Protocols approach to global warming.

When the Climate Action group went by bus to Portland Maine to protest use of their pipeline for tar sands oil, there was an amazing togetherness and camaraderie.

I believe that the social justice programs here are very strong and should continue to receive our focus and support.

Take up the fight against carbon emissions

Getting a team together to work for a Social Justice issue

I want to feel compelled to action to support our blue green planet.

Our sister church in Europe. Extending our love and friendship

Yeah for all the groups within again that's available I just need to step up seasonal stuff a bit more problematic. Keep advertising

Welcoming and capable RE for kids with special needs.

Working with clients in need of assistance from the Interfaith Help Fund is my way of acting on our UU principles. Helping others is nurturing for me.

I would love us to forge closer ties to the American Friends Service Committee in Northampton.

How do we remain/become relevant in this age of technology (and disconnect)?

Work at Food Bank

Working with others...

The pleasure and sense of worth being part of the Haiti Support Group.

Get more of us involved in social justice – encourage commitment to those activities and efforts already existing or create others.



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Keeping it fresh—adult ed spirituality—did a workshop with Janet and would repeat a similar experience. Felt nourished!

Getting to know others in small groups to feel connected and learn each others life stories, is important to me.

People are given opportunities to make a difference in large ways and small ways.

Learning with others, education, books – shared experience—classes

Welcome more young families

Groups coming together to discuss similar needs or experiences. Foster community and support

People sharing their stories and experiences with the group

Outreach: Challenge every household to encourage/minister one new member into the folds of the UU

Preparing food with others for the cot shelter, or coffee hour, pot-lucks, etc.

Better promote our principles and values, both internally and externally

When my mother used to help RE: We should talk about-helping out at homeless shelters, especially with children. Maybe a “hand-me-down” drive

Have a young adults group (post high school) Once established, I can imagine them sharing their perspectives a a dinner.

Called to our higher selves: The challenge of listening and being heard in a diverse community

Feeling Nourished: Seeing folks of all age levels participate in skits and contribute to the overall meaningfulness of a service

Idea: More intergenerational services where families are visible might encourage roe young families to attend as well as opportunities for young families to be involved. For example, a young actors guild that puts on a play once a year directed by members of the youth group and adults interested in acting as well... use it as a fundraiser.

Feeling cared for and supported when people learned for the first time of our daughter’s death.



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Dreams: More active outreach on issues like climate and immigration, not just passive actions. (Real personal involvement)

Envision more opportunities to bring our UU values into the wider community through social action projects

I feel proud to be a member when our congregation opens its doors to provide spiritual refuge when bad things happen, 9/11 and other tragedies.

More collaboration with others groups on big issues – living wage, with the larger area – Springfield, Holyoke.

Participating in the pride march with UUs

The UUA is working on a curriculum to education congregations about disability. We should do this. How does the 'church' respond (differently from human service agencies) to the struggles in our community?

Helping out at UU café on New Years Eve

Acting on a shared vision of our future

Giving a voice publicly to justice—living wage

Top Priority: We need to consciously put social justice, morel stands, and especially efforts against climate change, at the center of our services and work. We need deep thinking and reflection from the pulpit.

The Mitten Tree

UU small group ministry

Friday evening the Social Justice Groups present their various projects together and thought about new ways to be active and encourage more people in our society to be active in changing our world for the better.

Youth Group worship and camping experience

Shared willingness to participate actively

Reach out for social action – draw in new committed members through specific local and global problems. We have the power to change!



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Action Awareness Committee for LGBT concerns – all voices were valued, responsibility was shared, we made a difference, raised awareness in our congregation and in our community, we had fun and felt a part of a community.

The Hot Chocolate Run with UUs

Through community service activities, collaborate with other UUs for example UUND worked with the Amherst UU on events related to immigration. This was led by Karen Johnston. It was engaging and educational. Let's do something like this again!

Can we forge closer ties to 350.org?

What can we do to prevent any more deaths from opiates?

(Hu)man(s) thinks with their hands--We know what we believe we need to act on it.

After school programs for youth

I wish that the Northampton/Florence UU would be a leader in Noho/Flo area to become a peace-filled community. This would mean 1.) organizing and acknowledging the violence in our neighborhoods 2.) taking action to make a difference (becoming trauma involved) 3.) Trauma champions tough training, support and assistance. Though this happening in many human service agencies, violence is a public health issue and needs a community response.

Helping our elders before it's critical/crisis.

Meeting the needs of others through volunteering and donating time or supplies.

With complete confidence I can say that I can not begin to ask all the questions that are to ask in this world of ours unless, perchance, we looked in the Mr. Roger's Neighborhood.

When "downstairs at USNF" was a constant on the progressive/gay social calendar (mid-90s) the community came into our space. That's part of how I came here. It already felt connected to my world.

Exploring ways of deeper conversation and congressional involvement with our partner church in Transylvania—using technology and involving RE and adults to broaden our connections. –cultural exchanges.

Singing!

Offer more seminars or week courses—i.e. on diversity.



USNF Sheltering Flame Service Chalice Summaries

I have long dreamed in my 60 years as a UU that my congregation could put aside their personally over-___ concerns and for once pull together as one on a project. In this congregation it happened on one golden day when we all, in one-way or another, worked together to support Tree House by putting our storytelling festival. The joy of seeing ___ faces in a new light and location all coming together to accomplish one thing. The support of ___ concept of life in a community of children in foster care. The sad thing is that this concern has not lasted.



USNF Sheltering Flame Service Chalice Summaries

SPACES INBETWEEN

Ask the question no one has asked yet burns to!

Singing as part of the shared experience of UU service

One service for all

Higher self: Participating in Janet's series (last year?) of meetings to present an incident that we analyzed and presented to others.

Spaces: To dream we need to be better financial givers but these are tough times so—what to do?

Learning and growing: Singing the hymns has helped me learn to read music and Greg's playing has introduced me to many composers

Meditating with a group of people

An experience: feeling supported through the birth and illness of my son.

A new idea: Increase awareness of those in need within the congregation so we can be more supportive of one another. I sometimes feel unaware of how I can help others.

We could host a targeted series of breakfasts inviting social justice leaders in specific topics to mingle with our congregation.

What is our role in creating a violence-free community?

I think that the children's and youth programs here are excellent and should continue to receive strong support and focus

Thinking in terms of a welcoming transformation: welcome and nurture and cultivate creative, outside the box thinking.

Look to other congregations across the country to see how to make RE more welcoming.

I have personally been transformed when I was in certain leadership training sessions and workshops especially those in which there was adequate time to exchange ideas with others.

Help dream big for good

Offer lay-minister training for those who want to lead summer services.



USNF Sheltering Flame Service Chalice Summaries

My UU identity and life infuses the choices I make and how I treat people all week.

Animism—Native connection (entire planet) on-on-one/be in the moment

Internet group as bulletin board, staff ... a barter. Vacation rentals, B&B for visitors, etc.
Rides (going to California, etc.)

Support when Linda died

I dream of services with more variety of spiritual experiences like today's service

Even more inspiring worship and celebration!! Lots of ways in addition to Sunday.

I feel that having two services most Sundays serves to divide people, instead of bringing them together

Would like more collaborative or lay led services. Also 'new' people on the dais doing readings and lighting chalice.

Invite ministers from other congregations as guest ministers during summer if they are visiting in area.

Sacred dance in a service like singing with our whole bodies. Holding hands moving together in a circle.

Base RE and Youth rules more on trust and less on fear.

Mindful attention in each moment at a meditation retreat

Mid-week small meditative 'service'

_____?_____ by other bereaved parents here and outside the society.

New Ideas: Volunteerism – Every member/friend should contribute 4 hours of service a year.