

Vision, Mission, and Covenant: Creating a Future Together

New Congregation and Growth Resources

Unitarian Universalist Association 2005

Vision - Our Dream

Mission - Who we are and why we exist

Values/Covenant - What We Hold Dear

Shared Ministry Goals - Together in ministry, we will..

Mission Objectives - Specific, measurable strategies

What Is Vision? A vision is a carefully defined picture of the congregation's future. It is not the current reality of the congregation, but it is a dream of what the congregation wants to make of itself. The vision answers the following question: Vision, Mission, and Covenant: Creating a Future Together 11 · What do we want the congregation to look like in five or ten years as a result of its efforts in ministry, programming, and outreach? The vision needs to be empowering and to be more than a cherished possession of just a few. It needs to be a shared vision, created among and by the people who are in the congregation. A shared vision enables a congregation to move from the status quo toward a new reality. A shared vision can create new ways of thinking and acting, and it should be broad enough to provide growing room for the congregation. A shared vision needs to be renewed continually as a congregation grows and accepts new challenges. Although it may be tempting to limit the vision to what we conceive as possible or to what we know the congregation is currently doing, the vision must be bigger than this if it is to be inspiring and empowering. A vision requires of us the ability to take a long-term view of ourselves as a congregation. It also must be specific and concrete so that it can be known and worked toward. The vision statement binds together the individual thoughts and desires of the people. Peter Senge, author of *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of a Learning Organization*, writes: "When a group of people come to share a vision for an organization [a congregation], each person sees their own picture of the organization at its best. Each shares responsibility for the whole, not just for their piece." Vision is what takes us beyond where we stand in the congregation and helps us both understand and take responsibility for how the dimensions and activities of a congregation fit into the larger, overarching aim for the future of the congregation. Yet the vision is not a creed, nor is it a substitute for individual or collective theological reflection. It speaks of the institution and what it wants to be. For example, the vision of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) is to become an antiracist, antioppression, multicultural institution. This vision is a clear and concise statement, and although it is built upon the UUA's shared understanding of the inherent worth and dignity of every person, this vision

statement is not a theological statement. It may well be that theological work by individuals alone and in concert within the congregation is a good beginning for work on a vision, but the two should not be confused. Similarly, the vision is not the words that you find in the legal papers of the organization. That language is often constricted by the legal process and usually is a general statement of the purposes of the congregation. The language is rarely changed and exists primarily out of legal necessity. (If the legal definition is vastly different from the vision of the congregation, however, legal counsel should be consulted to see what, if any, implications arise out of the difference.)

Two months after the emergence of Covid-19, UU the Vote and All Souls Unitarian Church in DC assembled a “How We Thrive” virtual choir to ground us in our vision of creating a new world where all of our communities can thrive. As Elizabeth Alex from CASA said during our election debrief, “the win is not the election. Winning is when our communities have what they need.” This song is a prayer and balm we need as we prepare ourselves for the long-term work of building safe and thriving communities.

We Shall Be Known the “How We Thrive” Virtual Choir Song by MaMuse

We shall be known by the company we keep
By the ones who circle round to tend these fires
We shall be known by the ones who sow and reap
The seeds of change, alive from deep within the earth
It is time now, it is time now that we thrive
It is time we lead ourselves into the well
It is time now, and what a time to be alive
In this Great Turning we shall learn to lead in love
In this Great Turning we shall learn to lead in love

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