



2022-2026

*Implementation Update - Spring 2022*

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## Introduction

The congregation voted to adopt the Strategic Plan for 2022-2026 in January 2022. At the annual meeting, many congregation members were eager to hear how the plan would be implemented. As we are a church of ourselves, so is the Strategic Plan only useful if we own it and use it to guide our actions. The Board of Directors committed to gathering and sharing information quarterly about how all the various church groups are planning to take actions that make progress moving us in the strategic directions in our adopted plan.

### How this Information Was Gathered

The board sent emails to leaders of church groups that seemed to have some responsibility for taking ownership of implementing each strategic direction. The board asked for a short summary of planning efforts and any actions taken, and each leader was also asked to share the request for information with any other church groups who might have information to contribute. This request was included in the Messenger in April and in the Broadsheet.

<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Strategic Direction</b>
George Bakula	<b>Welcoming Campus:</b> <i>Putting our campus and technology to work to serve our values</i>
Kathi Foy	<b>Engagement &amp; Connection:</b> <i>Strengthening connections and deepening relationships to care for each other</i>
Mikaela Renz-Whitmore	<b>Anti-racism / Anti-oppression / Multiculturalism:</b> <i>Embracing multiple cultures in our church and building our relational skills to be fully inclusive</i>
Bill Slakey	<b>Church for All Ages:</b> <i>Weaving all ages into all we do to support each other at each stage of our lives</i>
Maya Stephenson	<b>Social Justice:</b> <i>Joining forces with community partners and our youth to work for social, economic, and environmental justice</i>

Church groups provided information through an online survey: <https://tinyurl.com/UUABQstrategicplan>

The board compiled the information into this report. The full responses from each church group is included in an appendix.

### Purpose of this Report

This report is intended as a tool to communicate many of the efforts multiple church groups are taking to move in the Strategic Directions. The more coordination we have, the more momentum we can create to move in these directions.

The board intends to request information from church groups and summarize what we receive every quarter in 2022. Future boards will need to assess the effectiveness and usefulness of this approach and decide how best to coordinate and communicate implementation efforts in subsequent years.

# The 2022-26 Strategic Plan

## Summary of Strategic Directions

The following strategic directions represent elements that signal we need more intentional work to strengthen our efforts and effectiveness in these areas. Each of the strategic directions is described in more detail in the next section of this strategic plan, including what to consider and potential actions to take.

<b>Anti-racism, anti-oppression and multiculturalism</b>	Embracing multiple cultures in our church and building our relational skills to be fully inclusive.
<b>Church for All Ages</b>	Weaving all ages into all we do to support each other at each stage of our lives.
<b>Engagement &amp; Connection</b>	Strengthening connections and deepening relationships to care for each other.
<b>Welcoming Campus</b>	Putting our campus and information technology to work to serve our values.
<b>Social Justice</b>	Joining forces with community partners and our youth to work for social, economic and environmental justice.

## Order of Strategic Directions

The strategic plan notes that there is a strategic order for some of these directions. The following is an excerpt from the Strategic Plan.

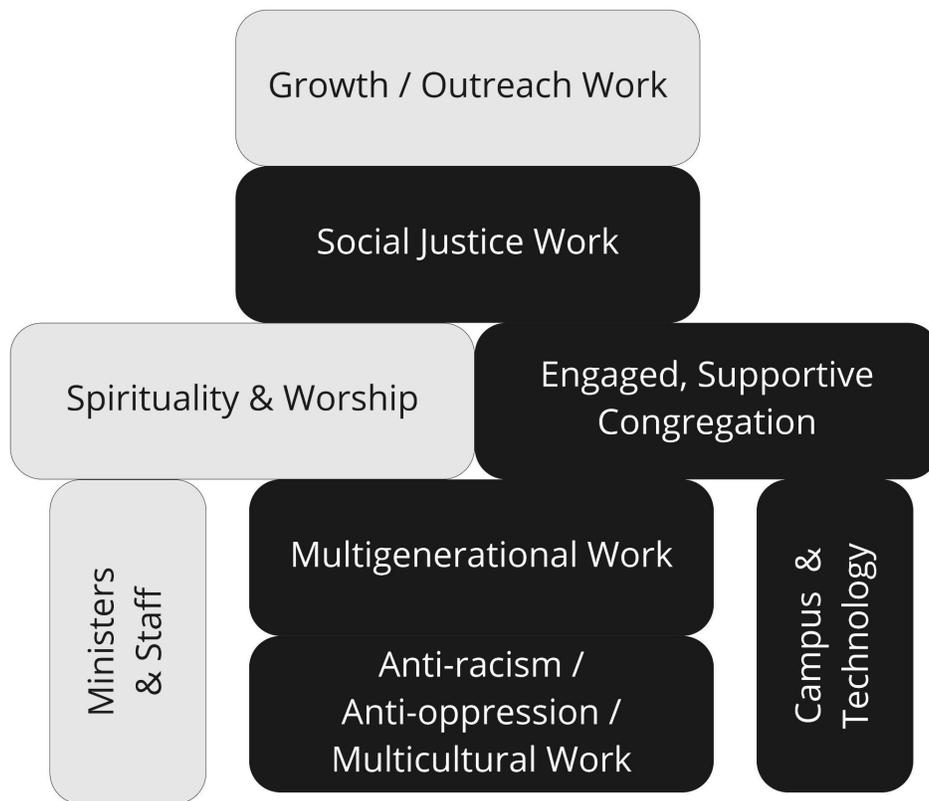
Some introspective, foundational work is needed before we engage in intentional outreach or branch out to work in an inclusive manner in the larger community.

Our foundations need to be built so that we can be multicultural and multigenerational in all that we do together and with our community partners, particularly before we renew our efforts to do outreach and engagement beyond our church to be most effective.

- Anti-racism and anti-oppression work is needed so that our church can embrace multiple cultures. This requires personal and interpersonal work that we need to accomplish to be fully inclusive. It needs to be done so that we can collectively realize true inclusiveness and acceptance of all our current and future members. We must embody the change we want to see in the world.
- We need to do the work to become a church for all ages before we can fully engage our youth into our social justice work.

- We need to do the work to re-engage with each other and re-knit our social bonds to support each other before we do outreach to bring others into our congregation. While no members advocated growing just to grow, several members noted that becoming more multicultural may open our doors to new members of color. Similarly, engaging in social justice work with community partners will elevate our profile in the larger community, which could result in drawing in new members. When those new members arrive, we must be ready to be a welcoming congregation to them.
- The work to become a more inclusive and multicultural congregation will ultimately serve all that we do.

A healthy, effective church picture includes the following strategic directions. These are noted in black below as opportunities to improve ourselves and what we already do in order to build on our assets to achieve our goals. The already-successful elements of our church are noted in gray. Ministers and staff and our campus and technology are noted as pillars that support our ability to have successful and meaningful spirituality and worship and an engaged, supportive congregation. Social justice work grows out of these foundations, and growth and outreach work is the fruit of all our efforts.



## Implementing the Strategic Directions

Many church groups responded to the request for summaries of plans and actions that they are taking to implement the 5 strategic directions. Many groups contribute to multiple strategic directions; some only “own” 1 or a portion of 1 strategic direction. Our church is a community of communities, as Paula Cole Jones says in advocating for the grassroots adoption of the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle. While each group has its own purpose and mission and determines its own actions and priorities, all contribute to the health and vitality of our congregation and the strength of our church as an institution.

Church staff is having a retreat in May that will focus on the staff’s role in implementing the Strategic Directions.

### Anti-racism, anti-oppression, and multiculturalism: Embracing multiple cultures in our church and building our relational skills to be fully inclusive

As noted in the Strategic Plan:

Becoming a multicultural church inevitably requires an introspection from within before any actions can be taken. Every aspect of our current practice needs to be examined: bottom-up and top-down in order to inspire new ideas.

The board encourages all church groups to look at your membership and ask:

- Does the membership of our group represent the people we want to serve?
- If not, are there structural barriers that keep people from joining, even if our group is “open to all”?
- Is there something about the way we do our work that centers a dominant culture and makes it difficult for people from other cultures to feel a sense of belonging and to be served by what we do?
- What steps can we take to be more explicitly anti-racist, anti-oppression, and multicultural in our way of working and interacting with our members and the larger congregation?

### Board Plans / Actions

The board membership includes 4 people of color and 6 white people. We begin each board meeting with an opening question that is meant to strengthen our relationship and understanding of each other as people before diving into the “work” of the church.

The board will be reading the following books and discussing them quarterly at in-person retreats led by Dámaris Donado:

- Subtle Acts of Exclusion
- Mistakes and Miracles
- Widening the Circle

The board has created a charge to a new 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Task Force to guide the church through a year of learning and action. To date, we have encouraged people to apply to serve on the task force and have created an 8<sup>th</sup> Principle webpage, where you can see the charge and the link to the application:

<https://uuabq.org/the-8th-principle/>

The board has also created a Policy Task Force to assess our bylaws and policy manual for structural oppressions and barriers to inclusion and belonging. The Policy Task Force is charged with crafting new policies or recommended edits for the board to consider. The board may adopt new or revised board policies or send new or revised congregational policies to be voted on at the annual meeting in 2023.

### **Staff + Program Plans / Actions**

The following staff and programs reported plans or actions toward this strategic direction, organized alphabetically by program name. For details about these plans and actions, please see the Appendix.

- Senior Minister
- Music Program

### **Church Group Plans / Actions**

The following church groups reported plans or actions toward this strategic direction, organized alphabetically by group name. For details about these plans and actions, please see the Appendix.

- ABQ Faithworks Collaborative
- Addiction Recovery Group
- Anti-racism Book Group
- Arts & Aesthetics Committee
- After School Tutoring Program
- Buildings and Grounds Committee
- Covenant Groups
- Coyote Willow Covenant
- Earth Web
- Family Promise
- Friday Painters Group
- Healthy Community Committee
- International Folk Dancers
- Landscape Committee
- Leadership Succession Committee
- Membership Committee
- Ohana
- Penguin Extended Family
- Personnel Committee
- Radical Generosity
- Readings on Racism
- Widening the Circle
- Workshop: Body-based Practices for Nurturing Community

- Worship Leader Team
- Yoga

## Church for All Ages: Weaving all ages into all we do to support each other at each stage of our lives

As noted in the Strategic Plan:

Our church has been fueled by the enthusiasm and curiosity of our young participants, and we want to adapt ideas and activities that draw participation across all age groups. This means intentionally **embracing a multigenerational approach to church**. ... [Our] existing resources and programs benefit all members and **build resilient people and relationships through long-term, everlasting connections**. ...

We need to remain intentional about leadership succession within the church in terms of generational transitions, and we need to create and institutionalize opportunities to build skills and capacity from an early age and throughout the evolution of volunteers and leaders in order to help all groups be more effective in their work.

The board encourages all church groups to look at your membership and ask:

- Does the membership of our group represent the people we want to serve?
- If not, are there structural barriers that keep people from joining, even if our group is “open to all”?
- Is there something about the way we do our work that centers a particular age group and makes it difficult for people in other life stages to feel a sense of belonging and to be served by what we do?
- What steps can we take to be more explicitly multigenerational in our way of working and interacting with our members and the larger congregation?

### Board Plans / Actions

The board membership includes 1 young adult, 3 members with children in the household, and 6 members who are seniors.

The board receives program staff reports each month, including from the Director of RE and the Youth Program Coordinator.

The board encourages and supports multigenerational church events and budgeting and planning for programming that supports people at all life stages and over time.

### Staff + Program Plans / Actions

The following staff and programs reported plans or actions toward this strategic direction, organized alphabetically by program name. For details about these plans and actions, please see the Appendix.

- Senior Minister

- Music Program

### Church Group Plans / Actions

The following church groups reported plans or actions toward this strategic direction, organized alphabetically by group name. For details about these plans and actions, please see the Appendix.

- After School Tutoring Program
- Animal Advocates
- Arts & Aesthetics
- Buildings and Grounds Committee
- Caring Network
- International Folk Dancers
- Landscape Committee
- Membership Committee
- Ohana
- Penguin Extended Family
- Radical Generosity
- Readings on Racism
- Widening the Circle

### Engagement & Connection: Strengthening connections and deepening relationships to care for each other

As noted in the Strategic Plan:

Our ministry might start with our ministerial staff, but it doesn't end there. Ministering, or caring for each other, and deepening our relationships among our members was in the hearts of many people in our congregation. ... [L]et's **build our skills around recovering from mistakes and repairing our relationships** within our congregation, particularly as we take on difficult conversations around race, class, gender and all the other ways that our complex identities and unconscious biases play out in all our church systems and personal interactions.

The board encourages all church groups to ask:

- Does our group honor and nurture our relationships and interactions as much as the “work” we do together?
- How does our group handle conflict? Do we avoid it, or do we embrace it as an opportunity to learn about each other and grow personally and spiritually? How well do we acknowledge and repair after conflict?
- How does our group reach out to other groups and to the larger congregation? Do we ask for what we need? Do we step up to offer help where we can? Do we embrace opportunities to collaborate and leverage our efforts and resources?

## **Board Plans / Actions**

Board members attend standing committee meetings and board committee meetings and act as representatives of the board in those groups. Each month, board members share a summary of activities and any action items that the board needs to discuss or decide.

The board tries to provide opportunities to discuss differences in our beliefs, our approach to issues and opportunities, and our interpersonal styles. There is always room for improvement. The board is reading *Subtle Acts of Exclusion* first in our list of study books, partly in recognition of this opportunity for growth and deepening of our skills around conflict and repair.

## **Staff + Program Plans / Actions**

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- Music Program

## **Church Group Plans / Actions**

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- After School Tutoring Program
- Arts & Aesthetics Committee
- Buildings and Grounds Committee
- Caring Network
- Covenant Groups
- Coyote Willow Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans
- Earth Web
- Friday Painters
- Healthy Community Committee
- International Folk Dancers
- Landscape Committee
- Leadership Succession Committee
- Membership Committee
- Ohana
- Penguin Extended Family
- Personnel Committee
- Radical Generosity
- Readings on Racism
- Widening the Circle
- Worship Team
- Yoga

## Welcoming Campus: Putting our campus and information technology to work to serve our values

As noted in the Strategic Plan:

Our large church property; beautiful outdoor spaces...; new sanctuary; renovated social hall; separate RE building; and recently purchased Arc Building are all significant assets that we can leverage to serve ... each other ... and our mission. ... As we make decisions about resources and programming, we also need to consider the assets and opportunities of our other branch campuses: the East Mountains and Socorro.

The board encourages church groups to think about their needs in terms of both physical space (to meet, store materials, etc.) and technology needs.

- Are there ways to use what resources we have more creatively or put them to a better use to reach and serve more people?
- Are there needs you have in common with other groups? Can you leverage and/or share spaces and technology?
- Are there physical and/or technology needs that are not being met? Have you communicated those to church staff or to the board?

### **Board Plans / Actions**

The board receives reports each month from the executive team, including from the Director of Operations (when we had one!) and the ministers.

The board encourages and supports security improvements, facility upgrades, and maintenance that keeps our church facilities usable and in good repair.

The board will be looking for either the general pledge campaign or the disbursement from the Endowment Fund to provide funds for an update of our campus master plan in 2023.

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- Covenant Groups
- International Folk Dancers
- Landscape Committee
- Membership Committee
- Ohana
- Personnel Committee
- Radical Generosity
- Readings on Racism
- Widening the Circle

## Social Justice: Joining forces with community partners and our youth to work for social, economic, and environmental justice

As noted in the Strategic Plan:

Social Justice defines this church, and service has been the soul of the church. ... This strategic direction is to put fuller attention to the causes, to partner more fully with others, and to use our resources more intentionally.

The board encourages church groups to think about their works through the lens of social justice.

- How does your work engage with efforts to move toward social, economic, and environmental justice – within our congregation, among our partners and potential partners, and within our broader community?
- If your group is more focused on 1 of these areas – social, economic, or environmental justice – what becomes possible or necessary if you try to address all 3, given that they are so inextricably related?
- Has your group explicitly addressed anti-racism/anti-oppression/multiculturalism in how you interact with each other, how you do your work, and how you would partner with other groups?

### **Board Plans / Actions**

As noted above, the board is taking on a course of study as a part of the year of learning and action around the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle.

The board expects that future boards will need to make decisions about the future use of the Arc Building and other campus facilities to help address homelessness, host social justice events, and provide meeting space and potentially office space for other social justice organizations.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Task Force and the Policy Task Force address the pre-requisites for doing responsible social justice engagement in the future, getting our own house in order before partnering intentionally and humbly with other organizations.

### **Staff + Program Plans / Actions**

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### **Church Group Plans / Actions**

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- ABQ Faithworks Collaborative
- After School Tutoring Program

- Animal Advocates
- Arts & Aesthetics
- Buildings and Grounds Committee
- Family Promise
- International Folk Dancers
- Landscape Committee
- Membership Committee
- Ohana
- Personnel Committee
- Radical Generosity
- Readings on Racism
- Social Justice Council
- Widening the Circle
- Yoga

## APPENDIX

- Spreadsheet of Responses – April 2022