

## UUFEE Small Group Process for Round 1 and Round 2

1. The Board discussed that we wanted to talk with every member of UUFEE and Friend of UUFEE as soon as possible after Rev. DeBeck left given the speed and terms by which she left. We wanted to hear how everyone was doing, what they were thinking about her leaving and about our congregation as it has been up to this point. We showed our ideas of questions to Lisa Presley, Representative from Mid-American District of UUA, and she added a few ideas. She encouraged this process. These were the questions we sent out to everyone. Our plan was to have at least two rounds of sessions.... the first as where we were and are currently and the second, where and how we want to move forward.
2. The list of questions was sent out in Ron Gill's UUFEE Monday email updates, they were emailed to all members and friends along with the request for everyone to sign up for a small group Zoom to discuss and answer the questions. Small groups were available on Sunday afternoons, Monday morning, Wednesday evenings and Monday evening. We had total of **53** people responded to the questions from the first round in groups and then via email, phone call interviews. The second round of questions/small groups were done similarly with responses from **36** members and friends.
3. Then the remaining members and Friends of UUFEE were listed and the Board proceeded to contact each person via email or phone to see if/when they would be willing to also complete the questionnaire. We have yet to complete this process and are still waiting for many folks to respond.
4. Two of the groups which were largest had two Board members present, one to lead the other to write responses. Each group wrote down member response to each question and all these reports were sent to Pam Wycliff to compile
5. Pam Wycliff compiled all responses to each question removing all names so responses would be anonymous.
6. An attempt was made to summarize responses to each question into paragraph form but found that the strength of some of the responses was diminished or missed that way so decided to present everyone with

all questions with the responses noted anonymously as recorded by Board member in each group.

7. The Board is hoping to glean useful information from these responses to the questions as an aid for how we see ourselves as a congregation and how we want to move forward. We think you, as well will find these responses revealing as to where we were, are and want to be in the future. Perhaps when folks have a chance to review these documents, we may want to get together in person and talk about what we all found.
8. See attached the sheet with questions for Session one and Session two.
9. With anonymity, each participant's responses were listed under each of the questions.

#### Suggested rules for small groups:

1. One person speaks at a time.
2. No interrupting
3. All ideas are viable
4. Okay to pass on a question
5. Other rules?

#### Questions

1. How do you feel about the last 14 years (or however long you have been with UUFE?
2. What are we currently doing or have done in the past that makes you feel close to the congregation?
3. What makes you sad about UUFE?
4. There are lots of responses to the departure of Amy as our minister. As you've been processing this, what are the things that stay with you?
5. What are some of the spiritual gifts you received from Amy?
6. What made you happy about UUFE? (Was combined with #2)
7. What are the strengths of UUFE?

- 8 What are the weaknesses of UUFE?
- 9 If UUFE disappeared tomorrow, who would we hope would miss us?
- 10 What questions do you still have?

Small Group Composites Round One, Question #1

1. How do you feel about last 14 years?

- Prior to Amy, intellectual base, want talk-back to return
- Amy good at beginning; Amy gossiped; Amy was pastoral
- Wants talk-back to return; Amy good at counseling; Amy not good at organization; not much time writing sermons
- In past committees, communication strong; now shabby, lacking pride – we can return to that!
- Hard to integrate, to meet people; Amy’s sermons not deep, organized – couldn’t relate
- Missed concentrated intellectual presentation to think beyond message with Amy’s sermons; sermons of past ministers carried message.
- Left because not fond of Amy’s ministry; never really “warmed” to Amy; sermons ok but not organized; didn’t feel Amy was doing good job overall; had much to do as mother with young family which took much of her time
- Amy and family helped out around church; RE became non-existent
- Like the people, church and grounds with woods-likes looking out at the woods;
- No common goal in last 14 yrs that had general appeal; no volunteer work as a group
- Focal point of Amy missed target big time; Amy was kind of our leader
- Sermons lacked meaning; enjoyed the music; Many people are gone
- Very disappointed not able to attract young adults; No purpose, direction or mission.
- When in leadership, not much support from Amy in last 2 years; gave time to Care Committee but did very little visiting or staying in touch with the sick; not pastoral
- Glad for opportunity to change directions

- Was excited by Amy's arrival and appreciated her messages in sermon
  - Initial burst of enthusiasm for DeBecks and that carried us for several years; eventually trajectory going in wrong direction; more people moving, leaving, dying – then COVID
  - Amy ministry more casual, informal, more social get-togethers, remembering it felt refreshing; big contrast between being on COM in early '90s and recently during Amy's tenure– unexpected? Initial shock? Things we discussed/behavior, felt she was having rough patch with some people, talked about people problems, not ministerial problems
  - COM was emotional data dump; felt like we were working with someone who was unprepared to face problems there were facing;
  - Amy used social media to announce office hours and those in congregation without social media felt exclusionary.
  - We lost many members.
  - Was thrilled with Amy didn't like previous minister's sermons as too much lecture;
  - Amy spoke to the heart; loved that they had a family and opportunity for youth group; Amy encouraged more congregational involvement in OWL;
  - lot of good energy; felt COM could have been better trained, important position;
  - sad ministry didn't continue COVID didn't help
  - Bothered UUFE didn't grow, in large part due to Amy as she didn't follow through when folks visited. Founding member visited with daughter once, Amy never followed up. When she died, daughter didn't feel comfortable contacting Amy for funeral.
  - Knows some folks didn't come to church because of Amy.
  - Glad she is gone, now we can make fresh start. Critical for Amy to keep in contact with membership and she didn't.
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### **After initial small group meetings.**

- Have not been involved since interim except for a few special events; little contact with Fellowship for some time.
- Very satisfied with Amy; did not feel UUFE grew in good way under Amy; congregation changed under Amy, styles changed;
- Congregation became more needed and very different from before
- More “taking” than “giving”; working with needed did not need more needy thrust upon them
- Had meeting with Amy very disconcerting: Amy distant and offered no follow-up meeting.

- Lost both parents, no ministerial support; Care Committee and CareLine did not offer communications. Am Liberal Christian and seeks that mixture.
  - The good things about UUFE that brought me here was gone
  - Proud to be at UUFE; Happy to have a place to go.
  - Past 14 years good years for UUFE except past 2 years different. Before COVID I feel we were finding an identity, with Amy leading us, encouraging us, even prodding us toward goal of synthesizing our actions with our words.
  - Moving toward being activists, we were growing, not in numbers, but spiritually.
  - Gordon's leadership, to me, leaned much more toward intellectual. I learned a lot from him including a lot of vocabulary that helped define my own spiritual goals. Then Amy challenged me to put those ideas to work in the world. It was good timing for me.
  - I miss being able to attend services at UUFE.
  - I have treasured my time with UUFE, particularly early years.
  - Have felt a consistent sense of welcome, understanding and encouragement. UUFE community good source of support for me in area where I otherwise often don't feel understood.
  - Been here since year after Amy, years were great until COVID, then that really screwed things up.
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### **After 3/12**

- Married/divorced at UUFE; after left realized how much I missed the church
- Like small church
- Mostly good; found a home here
- Loved the people
- Disappointed in Amy, during COVID got only 2 calls, none from Amy
- Never felt touched by Amy's sermons, never left on Sunday morning feeling "fed"
- Came few years ago and surprised how shabby grounds looked, cluttered building was, no one had shoveled the walk, huge icicles, many things needed repair; no children
- Was told social events had been stopped years ago, feeling I got that people had stopped seeing the mess and resigned to not being able to do anything.
- I like what I see so far. UUFE has great vision for moving forward.

- Initially, found Amy to be very personable; enjoyed most of her sermons
- As I got to know Amy more found her to be gossip, talking about other congregants, whining about how much work she had to do, how she needed vacation, shared information with me that were not my business to know.
- Found many people were unhappy with her ministry, finding no reason to be there and considering leaving.
- Was on COM and spent the few hours each time listening to her complain, talk about her family difficulties, talking about herself. Felt like it was Amy-dump each time. I eventually quit this committee as it was a waste of my time and not fulfilling the description of what I thought COM was about. However, Amy continued to define the work done by COM differently than what was the reality. Last time she called me, Amy said she was just sick and tired of all the “old, white men” she had to work with on UUFE committees.
- Feel I learned a long about the good things and bad things about organized religion.
- In many ways I am better person for having forced myself to do things I was not comfortable doing eg. Leadership school, being president of board.
- Was not happy with leadership of congregation overall. We are not good administrators.
- Members have cliques, just like back in school. If not highly educated, you are not worthy. It took nearly a year before anyone tried to have conversation with me.

#### Small Group Composite Round One, Question #2

#### 2, What made you happy/close to UUFE?

- Felt welcomed by congregation, greeted warmly,
- liked sermons and music, preaching was good but disappointed not able to get copies
- Loved potlucks, socializing, small group dinners in homes, fall and spring grounds cleanups, CR9 cleanups, feasters, Zoom coffee hour;
- Euchre, feasters, small group dinners, auction dinner, coffee hours singing. BUUMS euchre group grounds cleanup, evening presentations, auction movies, getting together to attend plays at Elkhart Civic – brought in new people
- Euchre and auction.
- Miss intellectually stimulating sermons, Miss quality sermons

- Liked feasters and potlucks, liked Spirit Seekers. Enjoy the “field trips” to other churches; since without minister now want more field trips
  - Not intellectual sermons;
  - Meditation group good; Meditation and potlucks
  - Glad we are zooming to keep things going and glad FOCUS is back
  - Misses people; Liked supplemental programs – Science and Society, meditation, yoga, tai Chi, Sunday morning Forum;
  - Make sure we are not relinquish going forward.
  - In general, the variety of services, not focused on one thing, liked intellectual property
  - Enjoyed Science talks, get-togethers, and social things; being with people who have similar outlooks on life as me;
  - Not too spiritual and maybe Amy emphasized that too much; like the people; Potlucks, willingness for people to be there when needed
  - Family camp, working for causes together as a church group
  - Study groups so get to know people at deeper level, Social activities, small group dinners, potluck dinners, feaster group, potlucks, sledding/chili parties, Doing things together. Holiday potlucks, feasters
  - The people, loved potlucks, progressive dinners-social gatherings which Amy didn’t encourage except a few at her house; Amy told RE Director to stay away from UUFE – we don’t do that.
  - Great opportunity to participate and have voice in different ways;
  - Many chances to do services either as group or individual; always some form of joys and sorrows – can’t imagine not having that;
  - Historically had sense of trying to be moral guide of right/wrong, moral compass. Embedded in our culture, we all have voices, respectful but trying to be that moral compass
  - Loved talk-backs after sermons, often got much out of this time from others. Cherished freedom to think independently.
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### **After initial meetings**

- Friendships with members and times we get together what makes me feel close. Even those I’m not close to I have great affection for I guess due to their attitude toward events of the day – open-minded, liberal, kind, generous and wonderful but sometimes their kindness makes it hard to speak truth to someone we love, but disagree with.
- Potlucks are great way to get to know people better. Meditation group good as well
- Once went to gathering at Amy’s house and that was great too

- Also participated in an OWL class and choir, both awesome.
  - The people who share much of my worldview. Happy to become friends with and to hear stories from people who had also come out of dogmatic traditions they had cast off.
  - Waiting for return to in-person activities.
  - Just being Unitarians and not bible thumpers is what I like most
  - When I first started coming to UUFE, was encouraged immediately to help buy playground equipment. Surprised but really made me understand and feel I was part of the congregation.
  - UUFE was known for being friendly and welcoming to guests; felt supported and encouraged by members
  - Remember the warm and embracing community before Amy; got emotional support in sermon when World Trade Center attacked.
  - Enjoyed art and artists of UUFE before Amy; Creativity of members was fed, Congregation was fed both emotionally and intellectually.
  - Warm and embracing community especially by Victors, Hershbergers, and Stokely-Stickels.
  - Walk-ins were welcome
  - Happy with UUFE's community involvement with social causes. Happy with being open community.
  - Grateful for years I was active at UUFE, attending services and helping with Worship and Arts. Also making new friends and acquaintances. UUFE lucky to have Rev. Gordon Gibson and Judith – learned much with each sermon and conversation with him. Interim not as helpful
  - Hoped to resume full and active participation when Rev. DeBeck arrived. Attempted several times but never felt comfortable and decided to not continue.
  - Positive times with UUFE centered on earlier times.
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### **After 3/12**

- The people and things I have learned from those people
- I know a church should be more than place to meet friends but toward the end of Amy's ministry sermons were less interesting, coffee hour essentially stopped then COVID. So...my friends that I didn't see during the week became the reason I went...and not every week. Seldom watched the you tube services or zooms during COVID
- The interesting people to talk to; working on the grounds in cleanups working with others on projects.
- Care Action Team pretty good, Amy gave occasional good sermons.

- A place for people like me and others not like me. Open-minded and ethically based group
- I like proximity to my house. Willingness to reach out and connect to her. Annette reached out to me early
- The people, Sunday services, different groups within the church
- Ways for community to stay committed.
- Felt accepted, respected and loved for self. Could be authentically my self
- The people. Found my spiritual home
- Passionate people who will lead us into next level.
- There is nothing. Have even offered and requested to learn sound set up several times, only took 3 years to be asked.

### Small Group Composite Round One, Question #3

#### 3. What makes you sad about UUFE?

- Not being able to meet due to COVID; no children and families
- Loss of great people via death; disappointed we don't have better way to recruit for members
- Lack of connection between adults and lack of children; coffee hour gradually got more brief; need "bring a friend"
- Sense of malaise, missed having more children. We can pivot and do things different for new future
- Missed holiday potlucks
- Sad when asked to be taken off book because I wasn't attending-told directed by Amy; not really unhappy with Amy but maybe we will find someone we like better
- Sad RE went down to nothing, Amy and Kevin tried but to no success miss seeing young families
- Few new and younger people; COVID-isolation; Sad we aren't better known in community
- Lost so many people and not "replaced" them
- Amy refused funeral service even after whole family vaccinated; happened to another person who had to go to LaPorte to find another minister
- Missed motivational and inspirational services; strong lack of minister leadership
- Objected to politics in sermons, seeking inspiration; Miss so few members and miss being in our building

- Concerned we may be dissolving as congregation – worry we have gone too far in lack of membership to overcome
  - Miss Spiritual part of sermons, too political did not give sense of spirituality and feed the soul
  - Concern of UUFE survival, swindling congregation and lack of young families
  - Amy couldn't carry her own without Kevin and had assured this person she had no intentions of leaving – felt lied to. Amy not fulfilled or happy being our minister and told members and committees that.
  - Amy was not the anchor and strength UUFE needed in time of COVID
  - Members lost interest in serving on committees or helping with cleanups.
  - Lack pastoral care, no calls from minister nor visits in hospital
  - Amy always telling folks how tired she was, how she needed vacation, how she needed day off, had to go to therapist, telling congregation how hard her job was is not fair
  - Amy complained to some members about other members; wanted to tell Lisa Presley that ministers don't talk about congregants behind their backs.
  - Not attracting young people. I know there are liberals out there in Elkhart that would find us appealing even in this conservative community.
  - Past ministers were very involved and respected in community in ways Amy was not. Amy failed to reach out.
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### **After initial group meetings**

- Very disappointed with what Amy turned out to be. Felt like I didn't matter
- Nothing to note
- Passing of some incredible members;
- Differences in treatment of some members as contrasted to others., some members not as important.
- Told story of Amy's early years about elderly member who had a visit from Amy. When this elderly member in distress called a UUFE friend to request more help, friend called Amy and was told Amy had just seen this person and refused to follow up on new request.
- Amy had her own agenda, one that did not include all of UUFE.
- When there is conflict between members who are science-based vs those more spiritual-based I think some people fell left out with the conflict.
- Sad about the decreased numbers of members.

- Am afraid sometimes we all forget to be careful around addressing fundamental differences, both within our congregation and without.
  - Can we assert our own convictions without disparaging others/ Can we celebrate our shared values and experience with joy of being in community without excluding people who think differently but want to be included? Can we learn from those who look, think, act differently?
  - Sad to have lost Rev. Amy. I know not easy to find replacement for her but hope we can continue being UUFE Congregation
  - Sad at loss of so many good people due to aging and death
  - Sad about membership decline.
  - So few people my age in thirties who are involved so I often feel isolated in life situation when I'm there even though ideologically I feel at home.
  - Sometimes messaging too political and partisan. Want to respect different ways of thinking.
  - Sometimes get very negative/narrow vibe at UUFE when it comes to politics, which makes me sad.
  - Sad can always speak truth at UUFE to people we disagree with. Sad we have reached this stated but it also gives me hope because everyone is working so hard to keep us going. Makes me feel we can make it.
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### **After 3/12**

- The board's inability to act in timely fashion - not governance or fulfilling our mission
- Board should not micro-manage.
- Lack of action, great intention, knowledge but don't do anything
- Aging of membership and decline of membership
- The drifting away of members.
- Sad and angry with clutter, neglect, downright mistreatment of facilities.
- Lost newsletter and though there was offer to write the FOCUS, Amy stopped it.
- Poor communication – no one knew who was on any committee; no long-range plan
- No young families; declining numbers and not as Amy said through death but folks just walking away. When Rev. Gibson here number of members increased by 80 in 8 years even after Miles left Elkhart....more than joined under Amy in her 13.5 years.
- Sad about not having minister. Wondering if she would have anyone near her age and a place for her son with no young families.

- Decrease in membership not only from death but also from people who left because of Amy
- Also learning folks left committee work due to Amy's "in charge" attitude and leadership.
- Morale dropped to lowest I've ever seen; Amy rarely spent time at church, no in church office time and she often would not answer phone return calls or emails.
- Sad by fact our leadership was so sketchy and unresponsive when Amy would move so strongly against the board.
- Absolutely no unification. CUUPS group was growing, including 2 families. Only other congregants that joined us for rituals were Oxana, Zanser and Jacki. Congregation is an embarrassment. If I left UUFE the CUUPS group would disband as it requires 3 dual members so I won't quit.

#### Small Group Composite Round 1, Question #4

#### 4. What the departure means to you and stays with you:

- Distressed that Amy shared confidences and gossiped about other congregants, didn't feel they could go to Amy for counseling
- Never felt they could just walk in her office and talk – felt she had attitude.
- Positives did not outweigh the negatives, time to move on
- No office hours except at the beginning was contrast to Interim Laurie Proctor who drove from Ft. Wayne 2X/week for office hours.
- Resented that Amy refused to plan sermons 4 weeks or more in advance and about her taking over then stopping the FOCUS, even ignoring offers for others to do the FOCUS
- Relief she is gone;
- Talked with many who already thought we had part-time minister! Ministry was tragic, very well-intentioned wanting everyone to feel they belonged but didn't execute very well.
- Poor and unhappy exit.
- Wish she would have left after 10 years – very sad at end, COVID did her ministry in.
- During COVID never received one call from Amy asking how they are; called once but only to ask favor – disappointing.
- Sermons weren't greatest and annual sermons, ie, cradle to coffin, water, etc. were like she just pulled them out of file drawer and repeated verbatim, no attempt to change them

- Had problems with her ministry for very long time but only recently found out many others felt same way
  - We congregants were way to nice for way too long; Need to focus on getting children
  - It was time for her to go, she serviced her purpose and “it was over”, Amy was just drifting.
  - We are part to blame as there was no annual review and we were needed to do it and be honest
  - Feels as release, sees opportunity to improve;
  - Amy’s presence at every committee meeting meant most committees could not discuss things among themselves; she influenced all that was done. There was no vehicle to register complaints for processing.
  - Fondly remembers Amy on parallel tract raising her children
  - Remembers gathering on plaza with Amy to protest “kids in Cages”, LGBTQ booth at Potawatomi Park
  - Hopefully we will have good change, get someone who will make us happy like before
  - Membership has dropped so much fear we won’t have money for minister
  - We needed more time for transition – though didn’t feel emotionally abandoned, did feel abandoned
  - Not enough transition time
  - Some anger, she didn’t help us with structure in committees, her mission ran out long time ago
  - Glad she is gone. Little was done and that speaks volume.
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### **After Initial groups**

- I miss Amy or maybe it is that I miss meeting with the whole group together.
- Amy brought me into UU fold; maybe it wouldn’t matter who the minister was as long as we get together
- Don’t know why I liked Amy; she was not perfect but none of us are. She was someone we could turn to, who was our leader and willing to do it.
- I appreciated Amy’s role in my life greatly. She encouraged me and gave me advice in key moments and I treasure her greatly.
- Don’t fully understand why she left so that leaves a gap for me. I do understand people change and move on, so I’m not upset with her but I will miss her.
- I don’t feel Amy’s time was, on balance, good for UUF. Time I was on Board especially during pandemic, I regret not looking more deeply into

information we received from Amy before agreeing- often reluctantly- to go along with things that were sometimes presented to us without warning but with expectation of immediate action.

- Felt there was not enough time or thought invested in messages during Sunday Services.
- I'm still a Unitarian.
- I miss Amy. Appreciate she gave us time to say goodbye.
- I feel that, having given immensely of herself for nearly 14 years, she gave even more in the last weeks of her service to us, by working so hard to help us with transition. I am grateful for her.
- Felt like I didn't talk enough with Amy; I liked her, felt I was supported by Amy
- Felt Amy was above and beyond many other people in the community when she was involved in community groups
- Felt she represented UUFE well and that UUFE was always well thought of by community.
- Abruptness of Amy's departure, everyone has to make own decisions but was surprised.
- I was not surprised. Actually, thought it might be nice.
- I'm still looking for home for a Christian with strong UU tendencies.
- Have talked to a couple of people who think this might be a great time to reboot.
- Amy was not very successful. Hopes that UUFE becomes a better fit
- Rev. Amy was pleasant in personal sense.
- Many personal traits mentioned a minister needed to have/be; recognized Amy had small children to raise, dealing with personal problems and other related issues, I did find her at times not well organized, not adequately prepared on substance of issues she was discussing, somewhat reluctant to intervene in circumstances that demanded firm voice and lacking the clarity and focus that develops from adequate preparation and acceptance of responsibility.
- During COVID only 2 people ever reached out to us and Amy never called or contacted them in any way during the whole time. Said she would help us if needed but we never needed her assistance. Guess she was good if folks in hospital but they never needed that.
- I was disappointed in Amy and never a fan or felt close to her

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### **After 3/12**

- How happy I am that it's all over

- Amy did good funerals/memorials/naming/weddings really well. But what I'm seeing now as we talk, our membership has been very unhappy for long time with Amy and direction UUFE is going.
- Yes, Amy had a lot on her plate as breadwinner for family and family situations but she also had a job and wasn't doing it.
- Thank God she's gone! Guess there has been trouble brewing for years.
- Large number of members left within last two years
- Had sabbatical but then changed her mind and just stayed home "enjoying a wonderful vacation"
- Several evaluations which were not positive; had credit card revoked for not supplying receipts for professional expenses.
- Tried to get Kevin hired as RE Director which is violation of UUA rules; failure of church leadership to supervise minister with several policies
- . No accountability on so many levels by her and of the board.
- Not applicable
- Sad for Amy – she wasn't that happy here; she had some feelings but also her personality. Opportunity for us to get interim.
- Same sentiment; only talked with Amy once, seemed tired and burned out
- Was not professional to not give more notice.
- Wish her well but we need a minister
- Amy was tired, burned out. Made right choice for her. Angry we let it get to that point.
- I miss her but "we aren't done yet" looking forward to getting involved again
- Our older members wanted her fired or demoted to part time. Some believing we don't need a minister at all. These actions based on previous minister's behavior and personal issues with visual appearance of Amy. Then being upset with her focus on LGBTQ+

#### Small group composite Round One, Question 5

#### 5. What are some of the gifts you received from Amy?

- Several passed in one group;
- She had good gatherings at her house, also some at church. That's what she did best – warmth in social situations

- She tried hard to get to know folks; had senior gathering for a while at lunchtime;
  - Some sermons were good but not all of them
  - Some bonding of families; some of the special mornings, e.g., Water Ingathering, Flower Communion, Pet Blessing
  - Many passed (5 of the 8 in one group). “White lies are still lies”
  - Did not help many grow in spirituality; talked about “build your own spirituality” class but did nothing
  - Couldn’t think of anything specific – spiritually empty sermons, no counseling, wished could be more positive but had feeling something was wrong.
  - Had to pin Amy down for discussions but enjoyed sermons and her point of view; learned much of UU from her and Kevin
  - Liked her inclusiveness and involvement in community.
  - Glad to have Feasters to maintain contacts.
  - Liked former members now expressing interest in returning.
  - Amy gave loving, caring rites of passage – funerals, baby namings, marriages.
  - Drive-through service and “visit Home” helped a lot
  - Learned a lot about LGBT awareness. Enjoyed Black Lives Matter trip. Led protest for Kids in Cages.
  - Good job with new member orientation session
  - There were no gifts
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### **After first group sessions**

- No data
- None. Liked Amy personally. Thought sermons were fine but unchallenging
- Knowing that UUFE was there
- Amy was accepting of groups, e.g., Pagans
- No gifts.
- Amy taught me that being open-minded is balancing act with humility. That, as surely as I am convinced of one answer, I will try to hold that conviction gently enough to be swayed by reason or intuition or new information or grace. In spite of gentle grasp to have courage of my convictions and speak and act on them, learned from Amy that courage and strength can look a lot like joy and kindness.

- Just the happiness and contentment in being with people like myself. I'm a bit outside the usual and always have been. Will continue to be "not a typical American"
  - No gifts.
  - Amy was good with weddings and Memorial Services – we were pleased with her work at both of those times for our family. She seemed very empathetic at those times
  - Amy gave me advice to face deep problems with family trauma and she was right. Amy's input then and at other times has been invaluable.
  - I've learned a lot of LGBTQ and UU history and that kind of stuff. She talked about things I hadn't thought of much but most of the stuff I found out on my own.
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### **After 3/12**

- Passed
- Support for LGBTW and helped the family go through that transition. Much support. Warmer hearted than Gordon Gibson but loved Gordon
- Amy different, feed or open spiritual
- Listening and learned about their child and about LGBTQ.
- Not intellectual leader but we needed someone to nurture our own skills for leadership
- Never felt close to Amy. Guess she did well for folks in hospital but we never needed that. Never heard from here during COVID
- In first year of COVID got small vial of "blessed" water and packet of seeds handed to me in my car at end of a pool skimmer. That was the Sunday service. Vial not sealed so water leaked out before I got it.
- Can't think of any gifts
- No gifts that I can think of
- Amy is the sole reason I kept coming back to service. Didn't always agree, or sometimes understand the subject but she never made anything feel pushy and I almost always left feeling better than when I walked in.

Small Group Composite Round One, Question #6

### **6. What are UUFE strengths, makes you happy about UUFE?**

- Unitarian church all-encompassing; always felt everyone will be welcomed, diversity, opportunity to expand religious horizons

- Lots of strong people at Elkhart-drew strength from people; congregation main strength
  - Congregation let people know it's ok to not know all the answers and keep searching;
  - This core contains former members and friends willing to help now that Amy is gone
  - Tech team who broadcast services
  - That Buddhists, agnostics, atheists, Christians, Pagans can find a place
  - Like-mindedness but numbers dwindling; Fair amount of land, lots of space
  - Likes the building, no debt, building that a lot of people put a lot of work into, woods absolutely gorgeous, building designed for our unique congregation.
  - Getting right person there might make a difference but we have been part of the problem and the nationwide tendency to not attend religious services.
  - Biggest strength-dedicated people who have worked very hard for the fellowship for many, many years, especially those we now have.
  - Agreed – wonderful people, grounds and building. Certain tenacity and determination
  - We are the ones who have come after and we hope to build for those who come after us.
  - Liberal religious presence, huge endowment for group our size; diversity and acceptance for all at UUFE
  - Story for All Ages – hope we can build that back into services;
  - Safe place for marginalized people
  - Efforts made to become a sanctuary if needed; UUFE's acceptance
  - The people are one of our strengths. Definitely the people through activities
  - Really strong core, many being here long time and put a lot into the church, directing it and keeping up the grounds
  - Agree - good core of people that have been there for long time and can direct church; welcoming place
  - Good building that is good for lots of different things; good people
  - Being with UUA is good thing and important, helps find ministers, leadership school, etc. and we won't go off with many kinds of spiritualism.
  - Openness, fairness. Welcomes all. Free to speak without feeling chastised
  - Not clear on strengths – seems like so much struggle; having a voice, there are people who care about community, we want to help so we hang in there
  - UUFE's longevity; continuity for that period of time and had continued growth, committed core of individuals but now number has dwindled so sharply;
  - Church has money and property, generally having ownership of things is a strength
  - Love the diversity of belief systems among members of UUFE. Potlucks; Accepting people, friendly welcome to new people
- 

### **After initial sessions**

- The people make me happy. What else is there? I'm proud to be a UU, our history and things we have done to make US the place it purports to be.
- Music and messages, especially those that make me think about things in new way or present intellectual or religious tradition I don't know.
- How welcoming the people are – go the extra mile, like making laminated name tag for me with my Chinese name on it which I really enjoy.
- Happy and strength- we have some very good people at UUFE. People who are very capable of leadership and support.
- People being kind and generous and loving just because that's the way to be, not out of fear of hellfire and damnation
- Happy there is variety of people that we attract. Have many long-term members and we have capable people leading us. Good workers, Generous. "We will survive"
- You aren't a bunch of self-centered Bible-thumpers, Trumplodites and Republicans who hold as their sacred opinion that their way is the only way.
- The people.
- Open-minded and more in tune with 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- This community actively involved in community/civic organizations; awareness of social justice/environmental issues and participation in activities to raise awareness and encourage change.
- People who bring commitments and variety of experiences from diverse backgrounds.
- When people "running from Christianity" UUFE gave support and shared feeling of family and community
- Being open community, honoring other belief systems; community outreach
- A welcoming community that wanted us.
- The people who are caring and dedicated
- The people of UUFE are its strength. Whole world in shambles and people at UUFE are working their bums off, trying to keep us together and trying to keep the church alive. What would we be without our people?

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### **After 3/12**

- I know church should be more than just place to meet with your friends. But toward the end, sermons were less interesting or spiritual and coffee hour had been essentially stopped. Yet, I did love to meet with my friends that I didn't see rest of the week
- I have continued as always enjoyed differences in members and how I can fit in.
- That folks have hung in there and are looking positively toward our future.
- The people, Sunday services, different groups within the church which are ways for community to stay a community.
- Happy with being accepted, respected and loved for being self, authentic
- Resilience of UUFE, mutual respect, dedication to shared vision
- Happy with the people, found spiritual home
- Passionate people who will lead us into next level

- People seem to rely on one another and need to be part of something bigger.
- Service and the overall environmental feel, felt like home. Strengths? You tell me. They all died in the last 10 years.

### Small Group Composite Round One, Question #7

#### 7. What are the weaknesses of UUFE?

- We lost Miles Labs and don't seem to have core of people in Elkhart interested in UUFE, new industries do not bring people interested in humanism. More interested in fundamentalist religions.
- Less community in Elkhart that supported UUFE. Need to figure out how to get folks interested
- Folks at Miles may have been more educated, more intellectual – if we can get one person like that in community others will follow
- Need a minister that doesn't focus on only one thing, broad-minded in community and reaching out.
- We don't do enough reaching out as a group. Used to help at Broadway, CCS, Crop Walk.
- Only 1-2 people would go with Amy on her projects – need 6 or more to make our presence known. Instead of just a few going with Amy, we need to reach out as a group.
- Amy seemed to focus too much on a small group of people and not reach out to other to do things and to do things like music, chalice lighting but difficult on Zoom if not planning ahead and just calling people the night before then ending up doing herself because too late to ask others.
- Not being able to meet in person;
- We may want to review groups we share offerings with more often and share with more varied groups;
- We tend to go off and do good deeds but not in name of UUFE- we should wear our UUFE shirts so people know where we come from
- We are not as welcoming to new people as we had been when she started coming.
- Our old age and infirmity; very little to attract young families and young people
- We are shrinking with remarkable number of deaths;
- We've not paid what is needed for quality minister

- Would love to have another full-time minister like Gordon but that will be very hard
- We have no common goal or project to include community and younger people like Granger Community Church
- Too much time and money spent trying to figure out spending money on parking lot when Board should be concentrating on how we promote our strengths to what we want to be or hand to the next generations.
- Need to identify who that target is, how to reach them, what amount of money towards it . Parking lot is immaterial.
- Need to work with First Unitarians South Bend, work with LGBTQ, UCC have more activities and connections to reach out to more. Put as much energy into that as we do parking lot.
- We have difficulty having discussions about reaching out rather than parking lot.
- Amy's deficits as leader caused problems;
- Lack of younger people;
- Holes in church fabric that need to be filled, need to move forward
- Lack of organization, too much dependence on Boston for guidance rather than ourselves.
- Need to be more streamlined, congregation waits for Board to react to current events rather than individual involvement.
- Need to quit just talking and "do it" be more socially active;
- Too many committees going on same time with same people on all committees
- Others feel no need to volunteer as work already being done by others;
- Roles of committees need to be clarified.
- Lack of volunteers is compelling hiring outside people to do grounds work; many committees lead by folks who don't want the leadership role;
- Many people have stepped away
- Most daunting, inability to take action, church has tendency to recycle same issue over and over.
- Lack of alignment, hearing that it's a problem but don't know nature of that;
- There is an age group at UUFE that have not felt supported
- Difficulty taking action; such disparity and difference. Simply can only continue talking about the issue;
- Conflict – ministerial leadership unable to influence in right direction, haven't had that in long time

- REAL weakness – biggest problem is absence of leadership, minister who doesn't have agenda and could point out viewpoint that would bring clarity.
  - Need diversity of people in leadership level;
  - Have not always had lot of people who wanted to serve leadership because they didn't want to work with the minister, Amy.
  - Not enough young people and that is critical; need to look at what we can offer to attract your people. Need to check out places like Granger Christian to see what they do to attract young families because they are very big and growing.
- 

### **After initial Sessions**

- The fact that no one wants to hurt others feeling by disagreeing about anything. Maybe we are afraid to disagree because we're worried, we will drive some of us away.
  - We could have better music. The music is great in terms of messaging and touches me deeply but doesn't always sound very good
  - Lack of younger people.
  - Don't have enough members. Always wondered why our appeal in community is not greater. Maybe without heaven and hell as carrot and stick hurts us.
  - Sometimes we forget when addressing differences with others we don't disparage.
  - We are so small in number
  - No longer stand out in community and other churches have taken over our role.
  - Few political positions taken, perhaps in reaction to past issues
  - Apathy
  - Getting non-members to know and understand us. Aging congregation, need new members to arise in congregation.
  - People of our ilk already donating to competing organizations – “why support one more?”
  - At times divisiveness and factionalism
  - In recent years a loss of sense of welcome and respect, sense a lassitude/drift.
  - We are surrounded by very conservative community
- 

### **After 3/12**

- We are elderly now

- Problem with outreach, lots of people need us but we don't reach out to them
- We were too dependent on minister as our face in community
- No kids programs
- Inability of all to make decisions and move forward
- Small congregation, aging population
- Too much work done by too few hands
- Worry budget not adequate for problems
- Risk of domination by a few people so many don't get a voice
- UUFE is education proud; we forget to reach below our education level so many times folks don't see themselves in our congregation
- If folks don't see themselves in existing membership, they don't stay
- Barriers – different age groups and financial differences and intellectual differences
- Need to reach out and be accepting.
- Legacy of personality cult of Amy
- Kept hearing of Amy's wonderful pastoral care but few can give examples.
- Had phone tree but it didn't work
- Stories now of Amy mistreating or ignoring people in need of pastoral care – instance of funeral for someone during COVID as she made different exceptions for some members and not others.
- Our unfriendliness toward young families is even displayed on our website: "...We have nursery care available for youngsters, if desired, but the expectation is for all but pre-schoolers and younger will sit in service".
- Amy "packed" the board, committees and chair positions.
- I am concerned over few younger families with children to connect with – not huge problem.
- Lack of people to help
- Willingness to pay their money for services but not for the work of the church – willing to let a few "shoulder the load"
- Our very low numbers of members
- Lack of younger families and members.
- Life in a very conservative community of Elkhart
- Few members willing to volunteer for work that needs to be done
- Individuals have great strength, but as congregation there is none. Amy was put under so much stress by our elders for wanting "in person service" when it felt more like just getting back in the building. Regardless the fact is she was only following DCD and UUA guidelines.

Apparently, no one wants to do any work, not just on building and grounds, but trying to get new members or community work as a congregation, like our Adopt a Highway cleanup obligation on CR 9

### Small Group Composite Round One, Question #8

#### 8. Who would miss us if UUFE disappeared tomorrow?

- The staunch liberals in the area; Where would UUFE members go- we would miss us! Nonprofits which receive our shared plate funds, food pantry users would miss us, I would miss us.
  - Wished community knew more about what we have done
  - Not sure that any church of median to small size would be missed.
  - Groups that would want to find a religiously liberal group/tolerant in this conservative area; Vanity question
  - Those that would like to be sought and found even here in the Bible Belt
  - Several passed
  - LGBT community might miss us; environmental groups might miss us
  - This question is for the future. Our basic concern right now is who are we and where do we want to go as an organization?
  - Need to get out as group to community – show presence as UUFE
  - Hope ministerial Board of Elkhart would miss us and miss having one more liberal group amidst them as not many liberal churches in this area
  - Would hope lots of different organizations would miss the people of UUFE as we put out good ideas
  - UUFE fills a niche, we are unique
- 

#### **After initial groups**

- I would hope lots of people would but unfortunately hardly anybody in Elkhart County knows who we are and what we represent. We are small, We are mostly Democrats in a very Republican county
- Any one who believes in the “principles” and community that benefits from group of socially aware and value-based persons who believe to strive them
- That members of the congregation would miss opportunity for fellowship like ours
- LGBTQ community
- Community that wants social justice; UUFE has shown up again and again opposing injustice by gathering and picketing

- People would miss our church family
- The Elkhart School system for Amy's work with them
- The work to become Sanctuary church, work in community
- Anyone who doesn't want traditional Christian Church
- Don't know how to answer this question
- I wouldn't want anyone to miss us. I would want something similar to come into existence that would fill many of same functions that UUFE filled
- I would certainly miss us
- Those who are searching for such a community without dogmatic beliefs would miss our presence.
- People like me who feel out of place elsewhere would miss UUFE. It's a sort of ideological and spiritual refuge in otherwise homogenous area.
- We would hope all the hidden liberals, who don't attend, but who know we exist, would miss us and then regret they didn't come spend time with us.
- I like being part of a team would miss not having people around me

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### **After 3/12**

- At one point the whole community of Elkhart County would have missed us as past ministers were very active in community and were very well thought of. Now we are not involved with the Ministerial Association, the jail, etc. Don't think we are now thought of and that is one of our jobs – to become again a face in community.
- Broadway Christian
- All of us
- Not enough would miss us as we as we are not doing enough social justice
- Each of us
- LGBTQ community
- Not doing enough in community outreach
- We can't make cultural impact in community.
- Elkhart wouldn't notice we were even gone
- Church Community Service
- Pagan families in the region
- Those using our outside pantry
- We would miss us
- Artists and musicians would miss a chance to appear here
- Used to be vibrant and strong

- Would like those seeking refuge from bad religious experiences and those seeking kindred souls would regret if we were gone
- Food Pantry people
- The groups we share the plate with each week. I like the transparency of what's going on with funds.
- I'm afraid no one would miss us
- I don't know as I've never seen our congregation do any public work except for Adopt a Highway

#### Small Group Composite, Question #9

#### 9. Any other Questions? Comments?

What do people think of way services are going now and different ways of doing them now

One person suggested leaving UUA but others questioned "can we continue being a UUA church?"

Carl Rust doing very good job hanging us all together.

What happens to all the stuff we've said?

Need to have chain of calling and chatting just for conversation, checking in and to connect us

We are never going to be super church but don't need a lot of members to support ourselves

There are few people who picked up and left because of concerns with our minister – those people would be prime people to get in touch with, tell them things changing and we hope you will give us another look. Also ask what you had been interested in liberal religion – tell a Board member – what did you like about us, what you didn't like about us, what would it take for you to come back – valuable information and not done now. We need to find true reasons and it gives a personal invitation to return

Board probably could come up with name of folks who left as people recently started talking more openly about Amy's tenure.

Will there be a summary, and will it be published? Important information

Is there a committee trying to find new minister? Moderator said it was a timetable we had to follow from Transition Office of UUA and nothing could be done until Spring/early Summer.

Why are we not meeting in person? Why can't we vote on it?

Need to rebel again UUA on this issue.

We could use Gathering Place to meet for in-person services. Other denominations meeting with masks, safe spacing, vaccinations.

Why dare we be under the thumb of a group who says not safe.

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Could we hire Kevin DeBeck as our new minister?

Do we have to do everything UUA says? Do people think UUA is like the pope?

Why did Amy leave?

Nothing now but maybe I'll have questions when we get back together and have potlucks.

I hope UUFE is able to move forward and reestablish the vibrancy and vitality that once was there.

I think the church needs a minister – know it's expensive but having someone pull all the parts together is important. The last minister did not do that but Gordon was so good at that.

Is there any kind of part-time minister available – that would be my second choice.

Thank you for ALL you do for UUFE.

Stepping back from active participation due to personal changes, not pandemic or Amy leaving; will always be grateful to UUFE for huge role it has played in my life.

I feel supportive of all members who are working so hard to create a community that reflects their vision.

Commends this process and appreciates the opportunity to talk about it.

Has heard more from UUFE folk in last 3 months than when a member

Been rough last few years, more connections are now possible

Curious to hear about and meet ministerial candidates when they come.

Suggested using Meadville-Lombard students as before.

Hope we can somehow survive as a congregation. I like having a place where I can feel not alone.

Hope the Board and new minister when hired will give some attention to some basic procedures for memorial services that honor the memory of the deceased. Long paragraph not pertaining to the question.

Why do I never get emails? When will our congregation stop wanting to be a club or try being ONLY a political group and NOT a church or congregation? Where are the board minutes posted online? Where were those board minutes Not posted for almost 2 years? When we will consider having a tech team of more than 3 individuals?

### **UUFE Small Group Meetings – Second Round**

#### **1. Thoughts about level of ministry do you want?**

- a. Full time minister?
- b. Part time minister?
- c. Lay-Led ministry?

#### **2. What do we want a minister's job to be?**

#### **3. What itemize top three priorities for UUFE at this time:**

- a. Revise mission and vision statements?
- b. Develop a new strategic long-range plan?
- c. Focus on Social Justice issues
- d. Revise by-laws (last done in 2012 and recommended changes by Lisa Presley)
- e. Fill committee members

#### **4. What elements of a service are important to you?**

- a. Opening
- b. Chalice lighting
- c. Reciting covenant
- d. Readings
- e. Member Musings
- f. Sermon
- g. Talk-backs after service (or after sermon)
- h. Music
- i. Hymns
- j. Special Sundays, i.e., flower, water

#### **5. What social events we already have or new ones or ones we had in the past that you would like to keep at UUFE?**

- a. Auction (also money raising event)
- b. Small group dinners
- c. Progressive dinners
- d. Christmas parties in someone's home

- e. Services at picnic grounds (as we've had at Island Park in the past)
- f. Family camping
- g. Chalice or small groups (something we've not had before)
- h. Continued Feasters

- i. Continued Adult Ed?
- j. Euchre
- k. Other holiday parties – 4<sup>th</sup> July, Thanksgiving, Sedar?

**6. What ways would you be able and consider helping UUFE?**

- a. Committee work
- b. Worship arts
- c. Communications
- d. Membership
- e. Building/grounds
- f. Stewardship
- l. Assisting in office

- g. Archives
- h. Rentals
- i. Fund-raising
- j. Greeters/Ushers
- k. Other?

This question was “saved” for the Board as not anonymous so people with given skills/talents can be contacted for the areas they mentioned.

7. **Would you be willing to meeting again as a group to further conversations?**  
Fairly unanimous all would meet again.

\*\*\*The comments shaded in yellow were cues only if folks couldn't think of what was asked or wanted a prompt. They weren't part of the questions if folks had answers ready.

**Small Group Round Two Composite #1**

**1. What level ministry do you want?**

- Interim minister but question if we can afford one X 4 responses
- Full-time minister – wants quality not be in hurry
- Prefer Part-time minister due to inability to afford full-time and work if no minister would be overwhelming for volunteer work. Not take minister of any kind unless good fit.
- Can we even afford either full-time or part-time minister? Enjoy visiting other churches and seeing how they are continuing during COVID
- Full-time minister asap to gather us together for mediation between those who miss Amy and those glad she left, someone not involved with UUFE
- At least part-time who could take load off Worship Arts
- Interim minister for year then maybe go to part-time minister and part-time office administrator to run office and technical issues.
- Full-time would be nice
- Full-time professional ministry bur maybe not possible in Elkhart. Question if we can offer competitive package and with fewer ministers available, Elkhart may not be desirable. Without paid office staff or DRE for RE program who would unless looking for impossible challenge.

Interim minister should be hired before any consideration of calling new minister

- Lay-led, at most Part-time, sermons only
- The best we can afford – Part-time or Lay-led with someone coming in to help. Part-time only to do funerals, weddings, and the number of services we can afford to pay.
- Interim asap to keep us together
- Pass
- Interim asap to coordinate the full-time minister
- Interim
- Lay or Part-time – Interim, work toward full-time as goal.
- Full-time minister as goal.
- Lay-led as churches as whole aren't doing well and we have enough people to do services.
- Full-time minister
- Enjoying lay-led services – maybe mixed with more structured services would be better
- Mix of Lay-led and contract minister
- Half-time minister would be beneficial and would having strong group within church to do services. Current Worship and Arts weakest ever. Want to see more members involved in services
- Part-time or contract minister
- Someone who tends to health and well being of our congregation, has office hours for visits if needed, one who follows through and follows up.
- Interim the Part-Time minister at least
- No minister at all. Don't want us to fall into trap we fell into before and life with minister we were unable to do anything about.( we didn't take any action and didn't hold her accountable)
- Part-time with full-time minister as goal.
- Interim would be good with full-time minister eventually
- Part-time minister
- No opinion
- Part-time – lay-led to labor intensive for President and Board
- Lay-led would be great but not sure we have the wherewithal to do that

Sm. Group Round Two Composite #2

2. What do we want minister's job to be?

- Pastoral care, eg, Memorials services, weddings, all rites of passage, present UUFE to community through professional ministry, provide nurturing, informative thought-provoking services at least twice/month, guide congregation in growing our church membership and children participation.
- Provide Spiritual leadership, run active Care Committee, provide leadership to our committees, represent us in community as Gordon Gibson did, serve the congregation.
- Same as above
- Good sermon
- Care for elderly and ill – call, check and visit them; address crisis situations with folks
- Thought provoking sermon most important; help resolve discord in congregation
- Belong to Ministerial Alliance of Elkhart, pastoral care
- Provide sermons, involved in social justice, available for emotional support and other forms of pastoral care, real intergenerational ministry
- All the above irrelevant if not full-time minister
- Pastoral care, regular office hours and keep them
- Check phone and mail, be a presence at church and provide services,
- Organize personal Credo class, be anchor and strength for members in distress – Give a damn!
- Perform weddings, be present to congregation
- Sermons and caring for congregation; representing UUFE in community.
- Funerals, weddings,
- Involvement in Community, have office hours, keep in touch with members, be accountable for their time
- Pastoral care, rights of passage, consultations, sermon/services, presence in community.
- Have executive ability- coordinating, delegating, pastoral care
- Community involvement, executive ability/delegate, stay in touch with members.
- Provide quality cohesive weekly worship services, pastoral care, funerals, weddings, dedications, listening to concerns of congregation, mediation when necessary
- Preach inspiring/interesting/meaningful sermons, maintain professional connections to local clergy and wider community
- Provide dynamic leadership to congregation and committees.
- Deliver sermons on Sunday, attend board/committee meetings, establish specific office hours of availability

- Deliver sermons, counsel congregants and be there for people in their times of need
- Someone who can help us heal and reunite us
- More than preach – need to want to do more than preach; pastoral care and social justice leadership
- Identify options we might not be able to identify
- Help with intergenerational curricula from UUA to help us grow
- Conflict resolution
- Accountability – annual reviews to be sure minister and congregation are on same page
- Active participation in social activities and community
- Relationship to outside community
- Leader to help direct us toward common goals and pooling resources/energies toward ideas that correspond to mission and goals we feel are most important
- Responsible for services, communicating with sick parishioners and their families
- Doing funerals, weddings and crises intervention
- Organize, conduct services, inspiring, thought-provoking messages, Pastoral care
- Messaging on Sundays
- Reaching out to congregation and being pastoral
- Hold congregation together like glue
- Pastoral, seeing people where they are
- Good with children
- Give dynamic sermons and a capable administrator
- Bring in new people and be pastoral

### UUFE Small Group Round Two Composite #3

#### 3. What are your top three priorities at this time?

- A. find a minister B. bring unified vision to fellowship and use social justice as tool to make ourselves know in community C. Grow the congregation X 4
- A. Stay together B. Stay solvent C. Come up with ways to have more activities to gather everyone together
- A. Fill Committee Members B. Revise by-laws C. Redefine what we are here for and where we want to go but no formal process, better done in

small groups. D. Engage/visit with other congregations about different ministerial arrangements that have been successful in achieving growth. What have lay-led and part-time minister led churches have done.

- A. Narrow down our mission and vision statements B. Social justice issues important and to do them more as whole rather than individual projects C. Membership growth
- A. Decide how we are going to be B. organize C. reorganize and direct – pick ourselves up and orient ourselves
- A. Maintain/grow membership B. be congregation that is more involved in social justice C. Parking lot completion D. Rebuild our committee structure E. Better communication about who is doing what and social activities F. Social Activities – dinners, easter bonnet G. More adult education – book groups UUA tapestry, meditation, yoga H. Attract families – children’s RE
- A. Staying open B. Finding minister C. Parking lot
- A. Search for interim minister B. Plan and arrange for Sunday services until minister found C. Hire part-time administrative assistant/secretary
- A. Realistic evaluation of current financial status of congregation B. Meet with UUA to get guidance about best path forward \*UUFÉ seems lost and floundering and has been sadly dying off (literally and figuratively) except for a few very strong committed members I do not see the energy needed to maintain and grow.
- A. Develop succinct mission/vision statement B. Start Interim seeking process asap C. Finish parking lot D. Begin social activities both for and with congregation in the community.
- A. More active getting together with planned activities B. Parking Lot finished
- A. figure out how to attract more members maybe by more social events to bring people in
- A. getting back together, B. forming cooperative committee and get people involved that way B. Parking lot finished so we can utilize the full building for rentals
- A. regain solidarity in leadership group (Board) and B. get that group aligned around goals so we see clear leadership in church driving us forward, C. Parking lot finished
- A. Getting new minister B. Get congregation back together with in-person services and social get togethers C. Keep UUFÉ economically comfortable by having enough pledge revenue to maintain and heat building D. Social Justice
- Survival – we need a leader

- Keep UUFE a presence in Elkhart
- A. Get back to normal, ie, potlucks B. Normal schedule again C. Reorganize bylaws to better support our committees.
- A. Rebuild – be together and rebuild what we had and get connected B. decide who we are and what we want to do C. Use endowment if needed for minister D. RE needed for when we have kids and for outreach to community
- A. Parking lot fixed B. technical support for services C. In-person services but Zoom coffee hour would be ok
- A. Have a minister B. Attract members and families that represent several generations C. get back to normal
- A. Parking lot B. get into a rhythm
- A. Decision of minister choice B. decide mission/vision statement C. figure how to sustain congregation
- A. Planned services B. Interim minister C. Social get togethers D. Planned group activity in community with opportunity for growth of UUFE
- A. mindset toward future not backwards B. tired of UUA talk, look for more independence C. Assess whether we can be viable in Elkhart County.
- A. Coherent Sunday services – focus on little things and fix gradually B. no sermon on social agencies
- A. Assure UUFE survives X 3
- A. Thought-provoking sermons and talk-backs for reflection X 3
- A. Develop rhythm, importance of church B. outreach C. higher profile of community service.

#### Small Group Round Two Composite #4

#### 4. What elements of a service are important to you?

- Meaningful message, not too long
- Ringing the gong, Chalice lighting, singing hymns, morning musing, sermon
- Music – gathering music, hymns, everything
- Meditation early in service or after message
- Flowers, sermons we can learn from,
- Feedback at end of service
- Other members involved – music, meditation, drama, morning musings

- Children stories for all ages
- Greeters
- I like current services now; talk backs for some services not all or after service over
- Chalice lighting and covenant reciting, ringing the gong are good rituals
- Variety of music
- The message, member musings, talk-backs
- Talk-back, joys and sorrows, variety of services
- Talk-back and story of all ages
- Music, joys and sorrows, meditation
- Music and Deb Inglefield would like to offer music talents more often
- Joys and concerns
- Thought-provoking sermons, joys and concerns, flower and water communion, singing
- Sermons (been long time since heard one thought-provoking inspirational, educational comforting informational service)
- Message, feed-back, joys and concerns, coffee hour
- Thoughtful message of shard values, less distraction from technology, back to formal openings/closings – more structure
- Get rid of technology, people need to come in person, only in person, talk-backs, challenging services even if controversial
- All of it (service) especially message and music, joys and sorrows, chalice lighting
- Simple service – no technology, inspirational service, joy and concerns, sharing
- Increased quality of service, esp. sermons, professional services.
- Services that stretch us and offer something to take home
- Music which increases consciousness.
- Joys and concerns
- Live music again, joys and concerns, different ideas and opinions presented, talk-back at end of Sunday presentation, want to see greeters at the door again
- Challenging presentations, live music, variety of subjects, talk-back
- All elements of services used but not every Sunday eg, not ring gong every week
- Likes rituals: gong, chalice lighting, reciting covenant. Use hymnals again and pianist again
- Joys and concerns once a month, water, flower, bread services to be live, likes musings.
- Relevant sermons that make me think

- Sermons, hymns sung, feedback after sermon, meditation time.
- Good sermon/message, able to sing, good coffee hour not shortened as before
- NO SUMMER SERVICES like in old days but a social activity monthly instead – flexibility
- Agree with no summer services and a monthly social gathering
- Rest of year traditional service: announcements, welcome, hymn-singing, sermon, benediction, ringing gong and lighting chalice
- Music with pre and postludes – wants Music Director, sermon, sometimes joys and concerns but not so long maybe a place in sermon for recognition or announcement about people that are having concerns so we are aware.
- Our church format is a relic of the past. If we want young people we have to change – sit in circle, speak out, share....not sit in rows like when we were in school – not relevant to younger people
- Member musings, talk-backs, need to mix things up, get out of the rut of routine
- Member musings, NO talk-backs, traditional service
- No talk-backs
- Chalice lighting, thought-provoking, spiritual sermon, occasional musings, live music, flowers each week, greeters, quiet time as service begins and have everyone remain seated until after the postlude; No talk-back unless maybe in Gathering Place after the service.
- Joys and Sorrows, open discussion after service. Special services like flower communion and water ingathering. Also like Pagan services.
- All key elements in service besides sermon – congregation that sings as part of service, feedback about the sermon afterward and meditation time.
- Opening, Chalice lighting, reciting covenant, readings, member musings, sermon, talkbacks after service or after sermon, music, hymns, special Sundays, e.g. flower, water, etc.
- Opening, Chalice lighting, reciting covenant, readings, member musings, sermon, talkbacks after service or after sermon, music, hymns, special Sundays, e.g. flower, water, etc.
- Sermon quality, Joys and Concerns, atmosphere – safe, warm, inviting. Totally disagree with “talk-back” . If folks want to discuss sermon, they should do that during coffee hour in small groups. One reason I left UUFE was because very hurtful, inconsiderate, and demeaning comments made during “talk backs” on at least 3 separate occasions.

Those comments were not challenged from the pulpit and I had to personally confront the inappropriate nature of the comments.

#### Small Group Round Two Composite #5

#### 5. What social events would you like to see at UUFE?

- Potlucks, activities around food are always welcome. Potlucks around church chores may encourage participation.
- Progressive dinners, adult education series, chalice/small groups, men/women groups, current groups that are already happening, potlucks or picnics, group hiking, group community social justice activities
- Potlucks, fundraisers like trivia nights and auctions, social Justice things like Envirofest and Crop Walk, Getting Out the Vote, Cleaning C.R. 9, Progressive dinners would be good
- Open house party; some different things, e.g., music Trivia night, karaoke – different things to attract different people, continue auction.
- Group social activities involving food. Traveling dinners, we had in past was good (progressive dinner), continue Feasters
- Progressive dinners, hiking things, Feasters, potluck dinners are good, recorded music listening groups.
- Small group dinners, different from progressive dinners and camping, canoe trips or other outdoor activities, concerts at the church, Readers' Theater from Elkhart Civic
- Live music, dancing, game nights, cookouts
- Lunch bunch, Science and Society and Pagan Groups,
- Cabaret
- Potlucks, Progressive dinner, family camp at camp Mac weekend, picnics, Ooey Gooey Auction, Trunk or treat, nature walks, women's group, coffee hour, pet blessing
- Game night, Camping, more concerts (as fundraiser?) Holiday parties, home parties
- Not service off-site but we could do one outside at UUFE; Feasters and past holiday parties, small groups dinners, Science and Society, Small Group Adult Ed.
- Christmas day dinner at fellowship, Trunk or Treat, "spuds for buds" and other fund raisers, the Lego League
- Fourth of July party, auction fundraiser, ice cream socials
- Music Joys and Sorrows, Meditations

- Progressive dinners and live music presentations, potlucks and Readers' Theater
- Potlucks, monthly euchre (open to public), feasters, ladies' euchre
- Potlucks, picnic in summer, small groups getting together, Pagan groups with differing focus,
- Small groups we have now, monthly potlucks, activities for community involvement, picnics
- Potlucks, involve public "break bread together"
- Euchre, potluck
- Small groups, potlucks – like the idea to invite community, community outreach, mend relationship with Elkhart ministerial association.
- Do themed potlucks weekly for awhile, coffee hour, don't need committees for everything!
- Progressive dinners are fun and encourage members to bring friends, walks in part as we did with Terry and Annette during COVID
- Agree with all above
- Halloween party, progressive dinners, small group dinners, Ooey-Gooney Auction, white elephant party, Sunday services followed by picnics, group camping trip, Feasters, neutral on Adult Ed activities.
- No response,
- No Ooey-gooney – too much work to get little more money out of the same small group of donors
- Potlucks, anything with food and coffee that brings people in
- Potlucks, but reminded people of effort needed to set up and clean-up afterwards. This brought up need to recover organization of unlocking before and locking doors after Sunday services, turning off lights, taking out trash, etc.
- Get-togethers of any kind
- Not sure
- Progressive dinners were mentioned, white-elephant dirty Santa adult Christmas parties described and thought good idea, small round-robin dinners at various hosts' homes remembered.

