

# UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF THE RAPPAHANNOCK

“What seems to count more than possession of instruments of power is faith in the future.”  
--Eric Hoffer in *The True Believer-Thoughts On The Nature Of Mass Movements*.

## **VISION 2028 -- May 21, 2018**

*Following is the proposed collective vision of UUFR in 2028 created by the Board of Stewards to be reviewed, modified, and supported by the congregation thus providing a guide to actions that will make this vision real.*

**General:** How we “do church” in 2018 is widely supported and being improved in response to the expressed desires of the congregation in our 2017 survey. That 2017 survey was used to aid in developing our vision. As we proceed toward this 2028 vision, we will learn, revise where needed, and build upon the vitality and enthusiasm that has brought us this far in the 20 years from the first gatherings of what became UUFR. What will the following 10 years yield?

### **Let's imagine UUFR ten years from now, in 2028:**

1) **UU for Kids** Each Sunday varies from 4-15 children among pre-school, elementary, and older classes--the latter two groups occasionally combine as a "one-room schoolhouse" with older ones assisting the younger. Teachers are members serving on a rotating basis supplemented with paid teachers. Utilitarian and aesthetically pleasing facilities accommodate all emphasizing flexibility. The RE Committee actively works together to structure and guide the RE program drawing in other adult members as needed including appropriate child care for the very young every Sunday

2) **Community Service / Social Justice —UUFR's Primary Faith In Action Programs** include Kids First Nutritious Snack and Dinners coordinating volunteers from area churches has achieved its goal of establishing 3preK classes in all four counties in 2021. The Fellowship's focus turned to building a base to better understand racism following UUA's growing emphasis on the racial aspect of social justice. The 2019-2022 racial justice study phase lead to our members selecting among a number of optional paths forward. The current program of working together across diversity lines dedicated to getting to know each other as individuals rather than stereotypes. Our "Sisters and Brothers Pairing" initiative, begun with

UUFR and Mt. Vernon Baptist in 2022, wherein together we studied and implemented projects (including the 2026 Newtown Child and Elder Daycare Center for our neighborhood) for the betterment of all. Getting to know each other as individuals is the key. Building upon that success, UUFR is now inspiring similar church neighborhood pairing projects in our four counties like St. Andrew's Presbyterian and Calvary Baptist in Kilmarnock. We found that worship style differences aren't inhibiting doing things together for the general good and are reducing the barriers, building trust, and encouraging religious searchers to explore opportunities.

3) **Sunday Morning Gathering Space** still is adequate for the growth our most recent minister and community support activity has inspired vs. our average attendance of 35 ten years previously. We continue to monitor our space knowing that approaching a 65-70 attendance threshold (75-80% capacity) means action is required. The 2019 building expansion's capacity of over 120 provides the needed space buffer to complete a sanctuary expansion if required.

4) **Ministerial Support and Paid Staff:** Our minister focuses on pastoral care and community representation with a passion for Community Service / Social Justice work supported by volunteers and a part-time assistant helping with weekly bulletins, The Chalice, website, building use schedule, and social media presence. Our on-call musician fills music gaps as needed although our members are the primary providers of Sunday morning music. Our UUFR Ministerial / Staff Endowment backs up these salaries.

5) **Utilization of Resources, Human and Facility** maintains a healthy mix of our in-house activities, our Faith in Action programs, and the care of our grounds and building. Member skills / desires are matched to the advantage of both the individual and the Fellowship with the help of the Leadership Development Committee. Our facility is actively used between Sundays for compatible activities including non-UUFR community programs favoring those that rotate their meeting site to broaden community familiarity with our facilities and programs. We have continued to improve the safety and security of our building.

6) **Growth** is being realized from our Kids First program, Sisters and Brothers Pairing, and our ongoing financial and volunteer support of key charitable programs throughout our four-county community. UUFR continues to strengthen our solid reputation by being a caring and capable

church group devoted to positive social change within our relatively conservative community. We are in the midst of our 2028 growth program highlighting the opportunities of UUFR. A feature is our six-month series of weekly newspaper ads sharing our principles and perspectives with humor and with a catchy phrase of the week. The thrust toward the younger set utilizes the latest technology, provides talks at RCC on comparative religions, a "thank you" potluck for the staffs of public schools, and sponsoring local programs for the public that introduce concepts of faith in the modern world. Combining that cherished reputation and our ongoing marketing / awareness program is yielding benefits not only with other churches comfortably participating with us in our community activities but also in our slow but constant increase in membership of about 2 percent per year vs. a relatively static area population growth over the last decade. Yes, we are recognized as the local church open to all spiritual beliefs including atheism. And, yes, we are recognized as the local church that is loving to all through all diversity issues. And our success is that the local community accepts and respects us for all that in a large part because of what we do for the community.

7) **Membership Enrichment** results from activities within the Fellowship that continue to proliferate in 2028 from the lull of ten years previously. Potluck Dinner groups with 8 members per group sometimes explore various philosophical and current event issues. Our minister leads a series of Sharing and Caring sessions. The Going Places Here group is off on a day-long adventure each month somewhere within a short drive and the Going Places There group heads out somewhere in the world on a roughly annual basis. Special interest activities wax and wane but for 2028 we have River Readers, Imagine Art, Ladies Lunch, Fishing Folk, and UU Gardeners. Our annual 3-day retreat continues to draw roughly half the membership to a variety of venues featuring programs generated by members for each other with occasional outside retreat leaders with specific expertise brought in to expand the range of activities.

8) **Communications** - Our internal and external communications have been expanded to optimize technology while continuing more traditional systems to assure both members and community are aware of UUFR activities and other items of interest.

## **UUFR Five-year Plan 2018-2023**

*The mission of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the Rappahannock is to put Unitarian Universalist Principles into practice through programs that empower spiritual exploration, critical thinking, social service, and provide a spiritual home for future generations.*

The UUFR Board of Stewards proposed the following Five-year Plan to meet the expressed goals and needs of our members and friends:

### Empower spiritual exploration and critical thinking

- ❖ Continue to improve Sunday services that provide in depth religion, spirituality, intellectual growth, critical thinking, and traditions / celebrations.
- ❖ Encourage and support programs that enrich member's lives like potlucks, picnics, retreats, dinner discussion groups, covenant groups, music programs, book groups, arts and crafts, and travel.
- ❖ Expand and enhance our Religious Education program for children including childcare, elementary group, Coming of Age group. (See Progress Benchmarks.)
- ❖ Establish an adult Religious Education program.

### Social service and connection to community

- ❖ Complete the expansion of Kids First.
- ❖ Sensitize members to issues of social justice in our community and nation.
- ❖ Prepare for our next UUFR community service / racial justice effort consistent with UUA's initiative. (See Progress Benchmarks.)
- ❖ Continue responding to opportunities to serve our community.
- ❖ Expand our connections and cooperation with the churches in our neighborhood and the greater community.
- ❖ Provide intellectual, cultural, and artistic programs open to the public.

### Provide a spiritual home for future generations

- ❖ Progress down our path toward ministerial and administrative support in the critical areas of pastoral care and community service / social justice activities. (See Progress Benchmarks.)
- ❖ Add building space to accommodate growth (children's programs, other fellowship programs). (See Progress Benchmarks.)

### Health and Vitality of the Fellowship

- ❖ Strengthen our visitor welcoming and follow-up program.
- ❖ Reinforce member support system for those absent and/or ill.
- ❖ Reach out with enthusiasm to the next generations of potential UU's. (See Progress Benchmarks.)

# UUFR Five-year Plan 2018-2023 **Progress Benchmarks**

## **Build a Religious Education Program for children**

- ✓ Every UUFR parent has been contacted concerning ideas and participation commitment
- ✓ Classrooms for children in the addition are equipped
- ✓ Youth social events, game nights, field trips, etc. have been added
- ✓ Use of playground, nature trail, labyrinth, and building by neighborhood children has increased
- ✓ Community youth group connections are happening through playground, nature trail, and other facilities on topics of life skills /decision-making, social justice, and environmental opportunities

## **Determine and implement our UUFR community service/social justice niche**

- ✓ Kids First expansion into Northumberland completed
- ✓ Kids First expansion into Mathews completed
- ✓ Research on successful community racial justice programs completed
- ✓ Racial justice leadership team identified
- ✓ Racial justice action plan options assembled and reviewed by Board
- ✓ Congregation has reviewed, racial justice options, adjusted, and votes to implement
- ✓ Selected racial justice plan implementation underway
- ✓ Progress assessment continues, challenges identified, and adjustments implemented

## **Establish a path toward ministerial and administrative support.**

- ✓ Contract negotiations are successful
- ✓ Minister orientation with each committee chair individually completed
- ✓ Annual funding for minister secured
- ✓ Ministerial / Staff Endowment enhanced
- ✓ Proposal developed for bylaws expansion to accommodate a future called minister
- ✓ Future called minister bylaw revision reviewed, revised, and approved by Board
- ✓ Membership votes at annual meeting on future called minister bylaw revision

### **Add RE multi-use building space to accommodate growth of programs**

- ✓ Sub-contractor and labor bids complete establishing firm budget commitment
- ✓ Construction schedule consistent with cash flow finalized
- ✓ Construction contracts reviewed, signed, and construction begins
- ✓ Supervision / coordination of construction, volunteers, functional and esthetic decisions, cash flow systems in place
- ✓ Regular progress and financial status vs. firm budget reports provided to Board and membership
- ✓ Construction completed, final inspection approved, and occupancy permit received.
- ✓ Furnishings identified, delivered, and are in use.

### **Utilization of human and material resources**

- ✓ LDC skills and interest sheets complete for each member
- ✓ Summary of UUFR activities shared with new members to identify interests
- ✓ Committee chairs contacted to invite new member participation matching interests
- ✓ UUA/SD leadership training programs identified and matched to potential leaders
- ✓ Financial resources prioritized consistent with UUFR needs and commitments
- ✓ UUFR added to the rotation of local ministers' council meetings
- ✓ Gaps in community entertainment / educational programs identified UUFR might fill
- ✓ Event committee established to provide an event for the community twice per year

### **Growth of the Fellowship within our four-county community**

- ✓ A plan for constructive action has been created
- ✓ The first six-month step to raise our visibility through public exposure is complete
- ✓ Implementation of the publicity plan, its efficacy and critique has been established
- ✓ Outreach in place for young families who may be searching
- ✓ Comparative religion video courses are offered for home use to all who are interested.
- ✓ A featured philosopher column is established in local newspapers

### **Membership Enrichment**

- ✓ V&P survey results has been utilized to provide more activity options to members
- ✓ Membership asked for further ideas, desires, and needs
- ✓ Activity coordinators identified for each
- ✓ Coordinators assess participation level and recommend which should be retained
- ✓ Board continues enthusiastic support of pilot program proposals

### **Communications**

- ✓ Communication Committee established
- ✓ Communication Committee provides plan for Board approval
- ✓ Communication Plan items added to benchmarks
- ✓ Website revamped and maintained
- ✓ Foyer calendar and Chalice reliably reflects all UUFR activities including yoga classes