

# Strategic Action Plan

*Westside Unitarian Universalist Church - Fort Worth, Texas*

*July 1, 2022*

The Westside UU Board formed a Strategic Planning Team in fall 2021 (Sue Anderson, Rocio Sarmiento-Ayala, Cindy Fountain, Myrtle McMahan, and Dwight Roberts). The team created a flexible plan, based on input from the congregation that aims to provide direction for the church in a changing world.

We intend this to be a living document that is revisited and revised periodically. We recommend that the board (or other appointed group) review the plan on a yearly basis, monitor the achievement of prioritized goals, and then set new priorities, establish measurable goals, and monitor progress toward those goals.

To inform the plan, the team read articles and tapped the wisdom of the congregation regarding Westside's future, examining the church's strengths, needs, and opportunities. Sources that informed the plan include results of the Transition Team's ministerial search survey, results of the Strategic Planning team survey, a survey of committees, and small group discussions held during the Feb. 27 church service, "Dreaming of Our Future Westside," including our youth.

In reviewing the 2015 Strategic Plan, we noted the achievement of two major goals: obtaining 100% use of our building, and improved hours, pay, and benefits for staff. However, due to the pandemic and other factors, rather than increasing membership, our membership decreased. Furthermore, our fundraising plans have not yet resulted in raising enough money to cover all our financial needs. The church relies on the Betty Sanders fund to make ends meet, but it will likely be depleted within the next two years. Thus, increasing revenue is imperative.

Following the above activities, we identified three major areas that we believe should be Westside's major focus for the next several years: **(1) Financial Stability (2) Welcome & Engagement, and (3) Care & Connection.** With limited volunteer resources, we must prioritize and streamline our efforts in these areas. Thus, the strategic planning committee recommends that for the **next two years**, the church focus on the overall goal of **increasing our financial stability.** We recommend that:

*To support the mission and vision of the church, Westside will have a balanced budget by July 2024. This means that we need to increase revenue to \$350,000. To accomplish this, we will create and implement a marketing and outreach plan that enhances the visibility of our church and helps to grow our membership. In addition, we will work toward developing a welcoming and engaging environment and maintaining care and connection within our congregation.*

Congregants made many suggestions regarding goals we could accomplish within each of the three areas (1) Financial Stability (2) Welcome & Engagement, (3) Care & Connection, along with specific actions we could implement (see page 2).

While limited resources do not allow us to accomplish all these items at once, we can selectively implement them as we are able. Streamlining and consolidating committees would be one way to increase the efficiency of volunteer efforts and avoid fatigue. Westside has been resilient during the pandemic (and without a minister). Together we are strong and can achieve our goals!

# 1. Financial Sustainability

**Overall Goal:** Maintain financial stability to support the Mission and Vision of Westside, and sustain our facilities and programs, fostering a culture of financial generosity that inspires giving.

**Objective:** Increase financial stability through increasing the size of our membership, as well as broader participation in our stewardship campaign and endowment. Possible actions include:

- Actively involve congregants and others (e.g., adult forum attendees) in stewardship
- Grow endowment through legacy programs, in memoriam donations, honorariums, etc.

**Objective:** Pursue opportunities to raise additional funds. Possible actions include:

- Promote building and garden rental (e.g., for meetings, garden events, local author events)
- Revive auction and/or other fundraisers (e.g., yard sale, casino night, block party)
- Use offering on fifth Sundays to raise money for church needs
- Write grants (e.g., UU grants and others to support marketing efforts)
- Offer OWL classes for material cost, plus small fee to organizations who would benefit

# 2. Welcome & Engagement

**Overall Goal:** *Strengthen our commitment to be welcoming to all and to create a diverse and growing congregation through expanded outreach and communication strategies.*

**Objective:** *Enhance external communication/marketing about Westside, including opportunities for media exposure.* Possible actions include:

- Create and implement a marketing and outreach plan for promoting the church
- Invest in marketing consultation (possibly through grant funds, UUA resources)
- Leverage media and technology (e.g., social media, website, radio)
- Provide street signs, brochures, promotional items with church name (e.g., pens)

**Objective:** *Increase racial/ethnic diversity, and inclusion ministry.* Possible actions include:

- Reach out to nearby LatinX neighborhoods
- Provide meeting space for intended populations (e.g., RAICES)
- Reinvigorate our Accessibility, Inclusion Ministry (AIM)
- Participate in/volunteer at events in Westside's neighborhood

**Objective:** *Increase collaboration with like-minded organizations.* Possible actions include:

- Seek opportunities to collaborate with nearby churches, schools, etc.
- Partner with community groups for social justice action
- Participate in local events and neighborhood organizations

### **3. Care & Connection**

**Overall Goal:** *Nurture and care for one another; foster fellowship and community.*

**Objective:** *Continue/enhance activities aimed at fostering connections among congregants and the community.* Possible actions include:

- Prepare the garden for gatherings and educational activities within and beyond the church
- Support and implement regular social events and invite friends to attend (e.g., potlucks)
- Continue support of groups currently meeting (e.g., covenant groups, humanist seminar)
- Re-establish or establish other affinity groups (e.g., young adult group)

**Objective:** *Provide support for volunteers and staff.* Possible actions include:

- Consolidate committees to enhance efficiency of volunteer labor ([see proposal](#))
- Reinvigorate/reinvent the Council of Committees to monitor volunteer needs
- Utilize staff to perform some functions previously done by volunteers