



Question 4 Hopes and aspirations - Notes compiled from all sessions and online responses - unedited. These data were first sorted and coded for similar themes, which led to the “big ideas” listed below. Reviewers of Question 3 identified numerous suggestions which were also included in this section. This document begins with the big ideas and a summary statement quoted from one of the respondents. The overview is then followed by the actual ideas, grouped by theme.

Q4 If we could ever find a way, I would like to see us.... (fill in the blank)

Big Ideas

“... to see us leading more ‘external’ events to reach the none-churched in our community, calmly thriving such that they swell our ranks and increase our capabilities for worship and action. (overall)”

1. More diverse congregation with regard to demographics (age, racial background, other identities)

“... to see us grow significantly as a congregation that is more diverse with all ages represented and has a strong program for children and youth.”

2. More visible and collaborative social justice action within the region

“... to see us be more directly engaged with others through voice, presence, work, etc., taking action on challenging issues in the greater Peterborough community.”

3. Increased communication and public relations within the wider community and region

“... to see us be known and valued as a safe and loving community for all ages and situations in the greater Peterborough area.”

4. Increased music and arts in all aspects (worship, community activities, space usage)

“... to see us be a hub for music and cultural events, concerts, children in the arts, performances, Messiah, as well as speakers throughout the year.”

5. Increased spiritual growth opportunities for current congregation

“... to see us maintain the opportunity for intellectual stimulation and spiritual connection in worship services, focus on expanding our sense of spiritual connection and depth, and be left with good questions or a new way to think.”

6. Expanded use of the building, including accessibility

“... to see us create more spaces for community connection and gathering.”

7. Connection and collaboration with interfaith activities, other religions and other UU congregations to broaden impact

“... to see us create forums for inter-religious dialogue to learn more about other faith traditions.”

8. Improved policies and procedures

This item included suggestions such as: revise the Covenant and Conflict policies; change our name to be less exclusively Christian; acknowledge the anniversary of our building; examine the history of PUUC in regard to Black and Indigenous peoples; focus on our identity; support volunteers; develop leadership participation.

Question 4 Hopes and aspirations - Notes compiled from all sessions and online responses - grouped by theme/big idea.

1. Diversify congregation with regard to demographics (age, racial background, other identities)

- Offer OWL program
- Understand needs of young families and youth
- Understand how to be relevant to younger generations
- Reach out to young people (<40) and solicit their input and contributions
- Serve more children/teens so they can grow up UU
- Use nursery space (beyond Sundays)
- Provide more activities for kids
- Build on our UU values of religious pluralism to outreach more to “nones”
- Develop non-traditional RE offerings, different days/times
- Educational offerings for children/youth to benefit wider community
- Focus efforts on multicultural, diversity, other identities (e.g. race, culture, sexual orientation)
- Collaborate to celebrate and promote cross-cultural understanding
- Assign ‘older’ member to sponsor and guide ‘newer’ members
- Hold regular events for families (with food and games?) on weekends? To attract broader demographic different from the Lyceum
- Hire DRE and youth group leaders
- Host arts and crafts events for children and families
- Hold spiritual group discussion for the community
- Host a young adult group for spiritual growth
- Have younger folks attend & join, including teens and children
- Host activities for families that are not strictly religious education but open our doors to a younger generation

- Find better ways to draw in busy young families, they are our future
- UU upbringing helps create a sense of spirituality in a person
- Increase membership
- Be safe and welcoming space for youth and young adults to gather
- Open RE programs to non-members - ala OWL program invites youth beyond membership
- Increase mixed generational participation
- Hope to attract new families as UU principles were important to previous families and important to people who grew up UU
- Have a multigenerational ministry to support young families
- Create robust youth and all ages program including music, plays, field trips to amazing places that include peoples and cultures very different from our own
- Recognize demands of 21st century on families, social issues, political concerns, world changes
- Grow back religious education (for children), with different models than 20-40 years ago
- Think about programs for children and families that aren't on Sundays
- Use market research to identify what young families want and need
- have a full complement of staff - FT minister and DRE to sustain a growing RE and adult program
- Provide OWL for sexuality education in the region - it will bring people in
- Youth service trips can broaden perspectives
- Snowshoeing, xc skiing opportunities
- Continue to grow

2. Get involved in more social justice action within the community

- Walk the talk
- Move beyond collecting money and lighting a candle and individual projects to something collective
- Weekly supper is not unique to us, so we need to expand what we do for community
- Sponsor an asylum family, possibly in cooperation with other churches in town
- Become more engaged in outreach to community
- Have events and activities that live our values in the community
- Serve local marginalized communities with concrete resources (e.g. food, housing)
- Identify a few specific, unmet needs and create solutions beyond what is currently offered
- Hire a community outreach director to create opportunities to more activities and social justice work in the community - person would do good work, help others, connect us with other groups such as interfaith council

- Link to a sister church in another part of the world
- Roadside cleanup
- Blessing of the animals (on front lawn)
- Physical work to help others (in addition to \$\$ donations) - earn recognition for being active in the community
- Complement services already available
- Partner with others for social justice, advocacy efforts, community development, political policies/causes
- Be more directly engaged with others in issues of the greater Peterborough community - using action, voice, presence, work
- Focus on areas such as race relations, immigration/refugees, poverty, housing for low income
- Discuss issues and advocate for local, state, federal policies aligned with our values
- Provide variety of social services, e.g. food pantry, emergency shelter for unhoused, short term counseling services, child care
- Cooperate with other churches on the provision of social services e.g. food pantry, emergency shelter for unhoused, short term counseling services, child care
- Serve as support network for families facing challenges
- Collaborate with other churches, non-profits, schools, libraries, community initiatives to serve the needs of people living in the Monadnock Region
- Work to save the earth
- Do more to actively embrace, promote and apply our 7th principle.
- Become an engine for projects that benefit the common good and an anchor for values supporting human rights within the Peterborough area.
- Give back more to the community than we receive
- Activities that can help create more understanding and compassion
- Practical educational projects to protect the environment and deal with climate change
- Need to have a grief group
- Need to walk our talk - SJ group thinks about important issues, would like to see us step forward to demonstrate social justice values

3. Increase communication and public relations within the wider community (region)

- Be more inclusive and welcoming
- Be more open and public and welcoming about what we offer
- Continue to offer even more community activities
- Host discussion groups on current topics with a moderator
- Share the idea of social justice in a more prominent way
- Collaborate with others to promote cross-cultural understanding

- Outreach to let people know that PUUC is a good alternative to other traditional religions as we values a pluralism of faith traditions
- Have a stronger voice and presence in the community
- Become a source of volunteers and volunteer training for various civic organizations
- Collaborate on service projects and activities in the community
- Become known as a place that shares our space/facility for civic meetings and events
- Offer community events such as festivals, fairs, fundraisers
- Host community events such as art shows, speakers, games nights, documentary films
- Arts and crafts classes for the community
- Cooking/baking classes for the community
- Share the joy of music and movement with the larger community
- Be recognized for the good things we do
- Hire a community outreach director/evangelist whose role is to be out and about in the Monadnock Region and share information about what UUism is and what we believe in
- Have a PUUC T Shirt or sweatshirt we could wear out in the community or when doing service or justice work
- More publicity in the Monadnock Ledger Transcript - regular articles featuring the many activities (auction, outdoor services, Third Act, meditation, Sacred Circle dance)
- Develop HUGE PR campaign to let community know who and what we really are
- Lead more “external events” as way to reach “none-churched” in our community
- Promote liberalism and liberal values more unabashedly in wider community
- Increase ‘brand’ recognition for our openness to differences, courage to support marginalized, being a loving and happy place to gather
- Include information about PUUC in Town Welcome basket(s)
- Promote the importance of a spiritual community with all ages, in response to national crisis of declining participation in organized religion
- Recognize demands of 21st century on families, social issues, political concerns, world changes - reach out with those in mind.
- Foster positive values - love - in the wider community and world
- Participate actively in social media to share PUUC
- People need friends, can find them in spiritual community
- Hire assistant for Lane to do community outreach and deal with things not directly related to worship, small group ministry, pastoral care - i.e. solve problems or respond to complaints
- Use market research to identify what young families want and need
- Share the ‘little’ things we do as we are headed in good direction - growth of membership, quality sermons, excellent music

- Share the loving, kind, compassionate energy of PUUC with Peterborough and Southern NH
- Something for the new people events in various towns
- Ads in the paper with a question: are you wondering about? Interested in? Come Sunday to UU
- More pamphlets around that show what we are - in pews, at Community Supper, principles in OOS and every communication from PUUC
- Facebook postings
- Be more welcoming - install a sign over the door that says “whoever you are, you are welcome here” - have something over each door with ‘welcome’ on it
- Outings at MacDowell Dam, invite nonmembers to come along
- Be seen as a place that shares the milk of human kindness - that means show caring, problem solving, helping, taking action, understanding what people need to know about situations and humanity

4. Increase music and arts in all aspects (worship, community activities, space usage)

- Make music more varied, active and joyous
- Be a hub for music and cultural events, concerts, children in the arts, performances, Messiah, as well as speakers throughout the year
- More robust music program
- Expand the music program
- More music from congregants with yearly Music Sunday service with all kinds of music
- Offer community events such as cultural events, concerts, plays, dance, and art exhibits
- Host community events such as art shows, speakers, games nights, documentary films
- More visual art, perhaps combining Muusic 4UU with a gallery in Parish Hall
- Arts and crafts classes for the community
- Music, plays, field trips to places that include diverse people and cultures
- Use sanctuary for eve more activities, such as music, theater, dance
- Share the love of music, a chance to dance, swing with rhythm, be more openly playful
- Occasional explicitly designed music offering that can lead us in dance (ex Salsa night!)
- Importance of role of quality music, both vocal and instrumental
- During worship, do what happens in Nashua where ½ the congregation comes from their seats to sing the offertory (ed. not sure what this means - large choir? Familiar offertory?)
- Host music concerts, lectures, spoken word performances, open to all
- Continue to provide excellent music, hymns, choir anthems
- Get jazz into the service and leave god out of it

5. Increase spiritual growth opportunities for current congregation

- Expand adult education
- Do more fun activities together
- Have more fun!
- Personal growth training
- Don't forget about those of us who are here now
- Have a forum to gather and reflect on questions posed at worship services - after coffee hour on stage, have a facilitator (perhaps person who lead service)
- Sermon discussion after worship
- Obtain feedback on services and reflection on the searching questions posed
- Host discussion groups on current topics with moderator
- More kindness toward each other
- Slow down and really listen to others
- Appreciate the effort being made to listen, pay attention to each other's voices
- Have more multicultural services
- Create opportunities to move to loosen us up and share the joy of music
- Keep balance in Sunday services between spirituality and social justice.
- Keep sermons spiritual and thought provoking; keep SJ to candle
- Maintain opportunity for intellectual stimulation and spiritual connection in worship service, focus on expanding sense of spiritual connection and depth, and be left with good questions or a new way to think
- Preference for the live reading of a book in Time for All Ages (as opposed to streaming)
- Preference for activities and interruptions to flow of worship to be someplace else (e.g. outside service, at beginning or end, in OOS or newsletter) as opposed to during service
- Continue good work in services and small groups, and in community, and expand in new ways, recognizing demands of 21st century life
- Focus on love and forces for good
- People need friends, find them in small groups and spiritual community
- Continue to provide thought provoking, quality sermons
- Keep the current seven UU principles. They are a gem as they now stand especially the 4th and 5th principles which are both absent in the proposed rewrite. It would be very sad to see PUUC lose its congregational autonomy and independence with the adoption of the new principles.
- find a balance between awareness of needs and uplifting the individuals in the religious community to feel not just a sense of purpose but a realization that all is not bad/sad/broken in this world.
- maybe invite God in once in a while

- have a full complement of staff - FT minister and DRE to sustain a growing RE and adult program
- Raise awareness of critical issues.
- Activities that can help create more understanding and compassion.
- Practical educational projects to protect the environment and deal with climate change.
- Be more friendly to each other, especially when they are new.
- Large group activities are hard. Prefer more small groups, getting people to be more open to meet new people, not just check in with their friends.
- Committees give you a small group with a purpose.
- Need to have a grief group.
- Get jazz into the service and leave god out of it.

6. Improvements to facility, including accessibility

- Facility planning and architectural expertise to revisit ideas about child care/after school programs to meet regulations and discern cost and feasibility
- Have building used more during the week
- Explore housing a child care program
- Use nursery space (beyond Sundays)
- Offer space to children and families for activities that are not strictly RE
- Move forward with preparing and changing the front of the sanctuary to be more accessible and less hierarchical looking, more open
- Improve acoustics in the Parish Hall to make it easier to converse at coffee hour
- Create a labyrinth (outdoors in the yard)
- Use Morison Room to store archives not accepted by Historical Society
- Move film screen from state to Morison Room to be used for meetings, PPT presentations
- Need more storage - could unoccupied RE rooms be better utilized?
- Find a way to open up the empty space in the basement
- Create more spaces for community connection and gathering
- Become known as a place that shares our space/facility for civic meetings and events
- Use sanctuary for even more activities, such as music, theater, dance
- Sitting in pews to listen to music is lovely in a quiet, contemplative way, but does not lead to moving to the rhythm - how could that happen occasionally (movement and dance)
- Put more emphasis on the importance of the place
- Be open more than Sunday mornings
- Grow outside the boxes of pews and Sunday services
- Building provides space for versatility

- Use the balcony (to accommodate crowd attending events)
- Host more community events - dinners, fairs, family gatherings, concerts, lectures, etc.
- Sit in a circle, with the minister part of that circle
- Allow the southern light (The Sun) into the sanctuary, versus keeping it out
- Open the walls and plant gardens just beyond, to bring Nature into worship
- Have many more services outside, in some natural setting
- Experiment with different formats, in the round, don't let the building define us

7. Connect with interfaith activities, other religions and other UU congregations to broaden impact

- Be more connected to the greater UU
- Create forums for inter-religious dialogue to learn more about other faith traditions - do we understand evangelicals, catholics, buddhist beliefs, traditions, rituals, values?
- Connect more with other faith organizations in and out of town
- Visit and cooperate with other UU churches as there are several that are really quite close physically (Keene, Milford, Wilton) as there is strength in numbers
- Pull the larger organized religious community along with us
- Speak and act like we are part of the interdependent web, not focus on "us" and "them". UUs are not above the rest of the world, we are part of the whole. See us as one.

8. Policies and procedures related to PUUC

- Find ways to develop leadership participation among congregants
- Find ways to still make progress on important things, but not burn out volunteers
- Attract more volunteers
- Explore our early history in Peterborough and our relationship to Black and Indigenous population of this area
- Share knowledge of PUUC's history (build on work David R is doing) and find way to use that
- Change our naming to be less exclusively Christian
- Create a new covenant and conflict resolution plan
- Get ready for 200th anniversary of building
- Decide who we are and who we aren't - focus
- Encourage more active participation among various groups in PUUC activities (River Mead was specifically mentioned)
- Teach new members how to make coffee
- Fete new members at the spaghetti supper
- Identify focused set of priorities, so we can achieve excellence, not try to be all things to all people

- Keep congregational identity (not let UUA overly influence)
- Preference for staying with existing UU principles, don't like all the changes being proposed
- Keep the current seven UU principles. They are a gem as they now stand, especially the 4th and 5th principles which are both absent in the proposed rewrite. It would be very sad to see PUUC lose its congregational autonomy and independence with the adoption of the new principles
- Visitor cards could have more follow-up - e.g. bring a loaf of bread with a pamphlet
- Assign a buddy to go to coffee hour with a new person - red cup held by Board so you know who to ask questions of, rather than new person who sometimes gets ignored