

Members Speak Their Vision for UUFP (July, 2019 - January, 2020)
From the Planning Committee
(Rebecca Wheeler)

We are listening! Here is your vision so far, gathered from our **July 2019 visioning meeting**, and from **the committee voices**. We asked what vision will allow us to better extend and live our mission -- to Grow in Wonder, Connect in Love, Engage in Service and Inspire Generosity. This is what you said:

We seek a campus inspiring wonder, with larger, flexible intentional spaces, with green space and a universal site design.

And that we seek to welcome a more diverse congregation, to better practice social justice, and to become more visible to the community

Let's look in more detail:

We seek a campus that inspires wonder

With enough space for a single Sunday Morning Service

We seek larger, flexible, inspirational spaces. Indeed, a sanctuary with a seating capacity of 250 or more, would triple our current capacity allowing us to more fully serve the peninsula in the longer run. We long for an expanded chancel, and a second story balcony. Might we develop a circular stage or church in the round? Or a chapel to augment the full sanctuary?

With a larger space for music

We long for a larger space for music. As we hope to expand the choir to 16 singers, we need a choir loft or stage, an additional electronic keyboard, and a larger multi-functional area with extra-large storage space for keyboard and speakers, music stands, instruments, hymnals, music library, etc. Within the next 3 years, if we are still in the current space, we will need larger choir riser platform and stands and space to store them.

With more and more functional classroom space

“Space, more of it” stands as a key need. We seek more flexibility and more sophisticated technology. Adult RE requests storage space, a new large screen TV and updated computer as well as enhanced meeting space that would support 40 participants, up from the current 20-30. We seek to have room to invite other groups -- for environmental justice or social justice -- to join in our meeting space, and room to sponsor peninsula-wide or regional environmental or social justice events.

With ample space for community meetings

We envision a building and/or campus that looks and feels new, and that is designed with inclusion in mind. It should have a dedicated greeting area that is separate from the social area, with space to display newcomer pamphlets and a place to chat quietly with newcomers. The greeting space should have an alcove or nook serving as a Social Justice Center/Library. Parents with infants should have a comfortable private area for nursing, etc. The social area should be large enough to accommodate a large buffet table and community meals, as well as conferences, dances, and other events. Additionally, there should be several (six to eight) multifunction rooms, equipped with whiteboards, wall mounted monitors (i.e., flat-screen TVs), sinks and cabinets. To expand our social justice ministry, we envision a space that can accommodate our participation in a winter shelter program for the homeless, requiring an industrial kitchen, showers, and a dormitory.

We envision outreach to our Peninsula community as we seek to expand Fellowship Circles outside our congregation to reach out to groups unlike ourselves to teach and engage in compassionate deep listening.

We envision a campus with green space, including attractive outdoor, community spaces

We envision a campus that both includes and evokes nature. It should have a community garden, a labyrinth, and modern ecologically friendly landscaping. We envision Green Sanctuary certification by 2022.

We seek a campus practicing environmental site design

We want a **building** which is environmentally friendly, energy efficient and commands a pleasing presence from the street. This may include lots of glass windows, possibly solar panels and/or grass roof and Platinum level (LEEDS) energy efficiency.

We need an **industrial kitchen** with closeable pass through and easy access to adjacent community space for 250. This will allow better support for member activities and possibility for feeding larger groups such as funerals, weddings, PORT or youth sleepovers etc.

We want **accessibility** features such as showers, wheelchair accessible doors walkways and bathrooms, also family bathrooms with changing tables etc.

The site plan should incorporate an **attractive outdoors** – with planting, drop off/pickup area, and a secluded fire pit/barbeque area for Earth Rising activities. Outdoors we will need new children's playground equipment on rubber mulch and fencing.

In order to support our children's activities, we need a larger nursery with room for parents to stay with their children, at least 2-3 cribs, child height sink, and changing table. Toddler room (2-3 years old) for those not ready for a class with changing table. Possibly up to four additional classrooms for children and young adults aged 4 - 6, 5 - 8, 9 - 12, and 13 - 18. These rooms should be multi-functional and of various sizes with lots of storage and also able to support adult meetings for Circles, Board, Committees, etc.

Accessible facilities needed

- wheelchair accessible
- allergy safe
- hearing assistance
- large print hymnals
- drop off area
- more accessible bathrooms

We need appropriate technology

We want easily upgradable technology, wiring etc. that allows us to stream and/or record services and events on line and view in some of the larger classrooms and nursery. With speakers, Screens, laptop plug ins, camera, WIFI etc. to support programing and connect with and support viewing through our website.

In the sanctuary we would like controllable speakers and to be able to project hymns, readings, pictures, multimedia, etc. onto screens controllable by laptop. Another possible WIFI use would be taking attendance by laptop. We need hearing aid broadcast for those who need this assistance.

We seek a more diverse congregation: age, race, sexuality, family structure

One that is more child friendly and more teen friendly

“We think the RE Committee needs to be more like a PTA, that every parent who has a child in the program should come to meetings. They hope all parents will offer their time, talents and treasures to the program on a regular basis, that they will seek to be truly engaged in the faith and spiritual development of their children. Our vision is for every child, youth, parent, and other caring adult to work together to build their understanding of this religion and spread it to the world.

To build a vibrant RE here at UUFPP, we need to have enough space to actively attract more families. It is inspiring to hear of how Norfolk moved from 9 children in RE to over 100 after they moved into a new, much larger, enhanced space.

A congregation practicing social justice, with more service outreach (Possibly including a Social Justice Rock Band?!)

We seek a congregation that is more visible

That holds public events, supports arts and culture, and is visible to the public

To become more visible, perhaps a lighted sign or an electronic sign in front of the administration building would help. Might we have a church bell? More marketing is needed. We seek to avoid the national trend in declining church attendance. Of course, doing so is not only about visibility but also becoming known as the church that *does something (what is our niche?)*. We believe we will become more visible if we focus on creating a Community experience that nurtures and draws people in. But we will need to do this without burning ourselves out. For instance: Forum could be advertised to the public and serve to attract visitors. But to accomplish this, we would need more ample space to accommodate them as we are currently at capacity in our forum meeting room.

But in this visibility, the congregation is also safe with

- **Security system:** a keypad entrance; security cameras at the outside of the front door; speaker system throughout building to alert if there is an emergency; intercom in classrooms to relay information.

To achieve our vision, we also need

A fully functional support staff, and full-time DRE, and staff for Nursery and Grounds

To better allow members and staff to focus on mission, we seek a solid administrative foundation that takes care of the day to day needs of the church, handled by a staff that is paid a livable wage. We also seek to use opportunities to share staff across Tidewater churches, where possible, to professionalize functions like payroll and accounting. A functional support staff will better coordinate tasks and share the load of needed actions across a range of members. This includes the central function of DRE, as well as staff for nursery and grounds.

With a strengthened music ministry

Commensurate with future growth and the importance of music in our ministry, we strive to engage a half-time music minister in 5 years, moving toward full time in 10 years.