

## COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM 2020 CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY

### What Brought you to FUS?

- 43% of the respondents said Unitarian Universalism brought them to FUS: (22%) because they were drawn to the UU faith, its principles, its traditions, its spiritual openness, or they left another faith tradition; (11%) because they were born into the faith, had a family member that was UU, and (10%) specified that they came to FUS because of relocation from elsewhere where they'd practiced their UU faith.
- 26% of the respondents came to FUS because something or someone that FUS-itself specifically offered (minister (4%), service (4%), music (3%), choir (3%), social justice (1%), its building (2%), CRE (7%), RE (1%), its reputation (1%).
- 14% were referred by a friend or the community.
- 13% came looking for a spiritual home for their children and to provide them with a liberal children's religious education.
- 4% attended an event at FUS (a wedding, childhood dedication, etc.) and then became interested.

### What keeps you coming back to FUS?

- Almost a third (32%) of respondents stay because of the community, the fellowship, the people, and the friends they have made.
- Another third (32%) stay because their faith/spiritual practice: (17%) stay because FUS offers them as spiritual home, their UU beliefs and values are nurtured here; (12%) come for the services and services; with another 3% specifying that it is the liberal leaning, intellectual stimulation that attracts them.
- About 29% stay because of something specific to FUS itself that they are connected to (music (7%), CRE (5%), ministers/staff (5%), social justice (3%), programs/activities (3%), RE (3%), choir (2%), the building/architecture/space (1%).
- About 7% said they have not stayed recently for various reasons, many citing Michael's departure.

### What is your favorite thing about FUS?

- 130 people responded to this question. The individual numbers add up to more than 130 because some people named more than one thing as their favorite.
- 27 of us said "the people" and 19 of us added a welcoming, caring community.
- 34 of us said a liberal theology, openness, spiritual inquiry, opportunity to learn about own and others' beliefs.
- 20 of us said the services or sermons.
- 19 of us said music.
- 12 of us said social justice.

- Among other favorites named were our buildings, intergenerational connections and the CRE program. One person's favorite aspect of FUS is the coffee.

**Where do you envision FUS will be in 5 - 7 years? What do you hope will be different/expanded/changed?**

Out of 360 comments...

- 80 hope the congregation will be more diverse. When a comment specified what kind of diversity they envision, racial diversity and age diversity (lowering the average age of the congregation) were far and away the most common. Economic diversity and diversity of beliefs also got several mentions.
- 57 said they want the congregation to maintain or increase engagement with social justice, especially racial and environmental justice. This was often paired with a hope that the congregation will become more involved in the greater Madison community, perhaps being seen as a leader in that community.
- 37 hope membership will grow.
- 36 would like to see the congregation keep doing what it's doing and be stable.
- 23 hope that our excellent programming will continue and develop further. Special shout outs were given to the CRE and music programs. Several expressed an interest in more adult education or spiritual classes.
- 22 discussed finances--they hope that the congregation will be financially stable and that members will give to the congregation freely.
- 15 hope for a high level of engagement in our FUS community.
- 8 mentioned our buildings--some hope that our buildings will be well cared for while others hope we move away from a focus on our buildings.
- Themes from the remaining comments include hopes for greater belonging, spiritual development, and unity within the congregation. There is also hope that our community will become more intergenerational and more open to change. Finally, we look forward to being together in person once again, and we hope that we can keep the benefits brought by our current virtual gatherings.

**Defining the Role of Minister / Ministerial Model**

When asked which were the most important roles of our future minister the following 6 were most highly rated: (endorsed by more than 50% of respondents)

- Presenting inspiring services
- Fostering a sense of community
- Serving as an active participant and respected leader in community partnerships and initiatives
- Helping us imagine our future and inspire us
- Leading the overall ministry of our congregation

When asked to define the model of ministry to determine the role the new minister will have in relation to our existing minister and staff, the following were ranked in order of importance:

1. Unitarian Universalist values are reflected and modeled in working relationships at FUS.
2. Responsibilities and authority are flexible and defined by the ministers as suits skills, abilities, and interests.
3. Roles are structured to emphasize **effective** decision making by FUS leadership.
4. Roles are structured to emphasize **efficient** decision making by FUS leadership.
5. Responsibilities and authority are clearly defined by role and title.

Comments received to this question varied widely.

Many (approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$ ) expressed strong preference for a collaborative model and indicated that wouldn't feel comfortable with a hierarchical model.

- Wise guidance and leadership should be combined with flexibility and openness to experiment in a collaborative way.
- Capitalize on strengths and skills and work collaboratively to achieve common goals.
- I'd really like to see and participate in a structure that's more egalitarian and absolutely not hierarchical.
- Congregational life is a process. It's a macrocosm of individual growth and development that is organic, not always a straight line, and best done with open-heartedness and good compass points, but not with predetermined outcomes.
- I strongly support a collaborative ministerial team with shared responsibilities and leadership. The team needs to lead us beyond the "building" and into the world following our principals.

Others (approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$ ) felt that in a large organization such as FUS, it is important to have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and that it can be difficult when people don't have clear job descriptions.

- A large church requires a greater need for structure and efficiency. This isn't to say that flexibility is bad but if there is too much flexibility in structure, responsibilities, authority, then responsibilities can quickly become confusing. We need a base level of structure to function well.
- I think a hierarchical relationship between ministers, staff, and lay people just lead to a system that operates with more clarity. Though it only works well with the right minister.
- Having a clear job description decreases confusion. I would hope that the job description fits the minister's skills, abilities and interests as determined by the search team.

Still others didn't care how the roles were defined and responsibilities were allocated as long as the work gets done.

- I am less concerned about the process behind the scenes than how the leadership functions.
- The ministers should work with staff to assure accountability as they work to implement our vision and mission.

### **Why should our future minister consider joining this next chapter of our journey?**

**WE ARE...** A large, educated, well-intentioned, active and vital congregation that needs assistance identifying our economic, educational, and racial privilege.

A compassionate, progressive, and engaged community filled with citizens yearning to make a difference in the world. The potential and promise that we hold as a community are deep and wide. We need an inspired focus to channel our energy into positive action.

Ready to engage in a deep and meaningful spiritual journey. A decade of commitment to spiritual deepening programs has developed a spiritual richness in the congregation that will be rewarding to our new minister. We are ready to open our hearts and make a difference in the world. We want to recognize our faults and do the hard work of repairing them, which includes a deep commitment to being an anti-racist congregation.

**WE YEARN FOR...** Someone who can witness, stimulate and encourage us on our mutual journeys.

Both intellectual integrity and spiritual leadership.

Generous and kind guidance offered without shame.

Loving acceptance and deep presence.

A strong and diverse community inside our doors and concrete action outside our doors.

**WE OFFER...** A partnership with a creative and energizing co-minister and a talented, strong, and dedicated staff, who support the programs of the church.

A unique and culturally vibrant university town full of opportunities.  
A community that, due to the University, government and industry presence, is constantly replenished with both young and seasoned professionals as well as families.

**YOU...**

Possess the patience, strength, integrity, and no small amount of humor, to help us move toward true right living in right relationship.

Can appreciate the critical crossroads we stand at and will work with us to set a course toward a better future for the next generation which is not based on the outdated notions of [white] privilege and consumerism.

**ARE  
SEEKING...**

The rewarding challenge of building unity through community and inclusivity within our congregation.

To be part of the challenging and exciting opportunity to be part of a community working to build a better, stronger, more just community.

To walk with us as we find our place within our larger UU family.

**JOIN  
US TO...**

Breathe new life into a 60-year tradition of excellent ministry, music, fellowship, education, buildings, and community engagement.

Find meaningful and different ways to engage the next generations beyond our traditional ways to be a true meeting house for those looking to find connection with a liberal religious community. Our next minister will see this as an exciting opportunity and have an important role in making that happen.