

**First Parish Unitarian Universalist – Canton**  
**Strategic Plan Executive Summary\***  
**May 2007**

**BACKGROUND**

This 5-year plan evolved from numerous conversations about congregational growth and vitality beginning at the annual leadership retreat in 2002 and including the following key milestones:

- Spring 2003: Hosted a Growth and Vitality workshop for parishes in the Ballou Channing District and formed a team to address growth and vitality issues.
- January 2004: Voted to become a Welcoming Congregation.
- Summer 2004: Became a Teaching Congregation and invited Megan Lynes, to join us as our ministerial intern for 2 years AND reinforced our commitment to music by hiring a professional musician, Jim Chubet, as our Music Director.
- June 2005: Adopted our Vision and Purpose Statement at the Annual Meeting to describe a future that we want to build together and express our thoughts about why we exist and what we want to mean to the surrounding community.

**Vision and Purpose for First Parish Unitarian Universalist – Canton**

We are a caring and diverse faith community,  
That seeks to nurture and inspire each person's spiritual journey,  
While serving others in our commitment to peace and social justice.

- June 2006: Met with Wayne Clark, Director of the UUA's Fundraising Consulting Services, to assess our readiness to conduct a Capital Campaign and for guidance related to future direction and how to get from "here to there".
- Fall 2006: A Strategic Planning Task Force was assembled by the Parish Committee to prepare a 5-year plan to be voted for adoption at the June 2007 Annual Meeting.
- 2006-07: The task force worked with committee members and the rest of the congregation to develop a 5-year plan to be adopted at the Annual Meeting on June 5, 2007.

**ELEMENTS OF STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Strategic Planning Task Force obtained guidance from Wayne Clark to ensure that our 5-year plan reflected the critical elements that have proven to facilitate a plan's success. Thus, our strategy includes the following considerations:

- The process for developing plan goals should be as participative as possible.
- Goals for the 1<sup>st</sup> plan year should be specific, measurable and achievable.
- Goals for years 2-5 can be less precise with the intention of refining them during subsequent plan years.
- The Parish Committee should ensure that resources are available and that plan goals and tasks are achieved according to the plan's prescribed timeframes. The Finance Committee should assist them in monitoring progress and achievement of plan goals.
- The plan is most likely to be effective if it is conducted as a rolling 5-year process, in which the Strategic Planning Task Force provides specificity to year 2 goals while others implement year 1 goals. The task force will also assume responsibility for extending the plan goals into year 6. This process assures plan continuity and continual updating.

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\* See comprehensive 5-year planning document for additional details.

# Strategic Plan Executive Summary

## STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The following goals and activities were developed through an iterative process of meetings with committees and the congregation and by surveying the congregation about their priorities for First Parish.

### **WORSHIP AND MUSIC**

**Goal:** To continue to strengthen the music program, so that it both nurtures souls of those who listen and involves members in diverse ways.

**Goal:** To establish broader avenues for worship, which address the evolving needs of our members and friends in diverse ways.

**Activity:**

- Feature more musical performances in the services.
- Develop a plan to make possible year-round worship.
- Develop plans for increasing youth / young adult participation in worship.

### **MEMBERSHIP GROWTH AND CARING**

**Goal:** Grow First Parish membership so that we fill the sanctuary on Sunday morning (and possibly need multiple and/or year-round worship services). Achieve a minimum growth over the next five years of at least 50 new members.

**Activity:**

- Plan and implement publicity campaign to attract newcomers.
- Develop stronger ways to determine member needs and foster mutual ministering.
- Encourage newcomers to complete an information sheet to facilitate communication and to extend personal invitation to attend Coffee Hour and participate in programs and activities.
- Promote communication between all committees, staff and volunteers to sustain and enhance our welcoming culture.

### **COMMUNITY OUTREACH/SERVICE/ACTION**

**Goal:** Make First Parish visible in the community by sponsoring programs that aid the less fortunate and reinforce our commitment to serving others.

**Activity:**

- Obtain outside guidance (possibly from the UUA) to better understand the essential elements of an effective social justice program and how to best implement.
- Identify the passions for social justice work that already exist within our congregation.
- Develop a plan for how to implement a social justice program that incorporates these essential elements and builds on our passions.
- Select a manageable number of social action issues to focus on and implement service-related activities that engage adults and youth of our congregation.
- Partner with neighboring UU congregations to increase program reach and effectiveness.
- Reflect on effectiveness of emerging programs, as we plan for future programs.

# Strategic Plan Executive Summary

## FACILITY

**Goal:** Ensure that our building is structurally sound, clean, comfortable, safe and aesthetically pleasing, inside and out. Includes projects such as: facilities review, critical building maintenance, handicapped access, sanctuary improvements, stained glass windows, landscaping and parking. (See comprehensive plan document for a prioritized list of facilities projects with cost estimates.)

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (ADULT, CHILDREN, YOUTH)

**Goal:** Engage First Parish families and adults in educational programs that are diverse and meaningful for each age group.

**Activity:**

- Hire youth group advisor to collaborate with youth, understand their passions and interests, and plan/implement programs, projects and activities.
- Offer children’s RE curricula that are dynamic and engaging for teachers and students that ensure continuity, diversity, family involvement and reinforce UU principles.
- Enhance adult religious education offerings.

## FINANCES/FUTURE ORIENTATION

**Goal:** Establish financial framework that facilitates future flexibility to pursue new endeavors consistent with our vision and purpose.

**Activity:**

- Develop planned giving process to solicit charitable bequests from members and friends.
- Transition Annual Canvass to a Stewardship drive that leads with our vision and focuses on program goals.
- Capital campaign planning to raise funds for strategic projects.
- Launch capital campaign.
- Plan for the evolution of First Parish’s organizational structure to support plan goals.

## SUMMARY OF YEAR 1 COST ESTIMATES

Worship and Music	\$1,500
Membership Growth and Caring	\$1,000
Community Outreach/Service/Action	\$1,000
Facility (projects to be funded from building maintenance fund)	\$18,000
Religious Education	<u>\$5,000</u>
TOTAL	\$26,500