

ALUUC Long Range Planning 2016 Overview

Long Range Planning is important for organizations.

Without a shared vision, we risk drifting and being pulled in directions that don't represent shared goals.

Long Range Planning Process Concepts

The planning process we are following has two important concepts:

- Getting as much input from members and friends of the church as possible, and
- Building on strengths instead of focusing on weaknesses and negatives.

Planning Steps

There are multiple steps to our process, and we'll be asking for your input today and several more times:

1. These cottage groups are an opportunity to tell stories about ALUUC, create shared meaning, and identify the strengths we already have and could use to create our future together.
2. From this cottage group input, the Long Range Planning Committee will create strategic visions, long range plans for our future.
3. We will bring our strategic plans back to you, and you'll be able to comment on them and suggest specific goals to implement the plans.
4. From your suggestions, the LRP Committee will create a list of specific goals that are do-able but challenging.
5. We will hold a congregational meeting to affirm the strategic visions and to prioritize the list of goals.

Over the next several years, the congregation will implement the prioritized goals. Progress on the plans and goals should be evaluated every year, and in the future we may decide to begin to implement some of the remaining goals – or to update our long range plans.

We really want to know what each of you have to say about the future of ALUUC.

We welcome and encourage your input.

We are excited to discover where you would have us go together.

More information

Members of the Long Range Planning Committee include Co-Chairs Debby Hagan and Carol Kneeder, Gwen Childs, Kurt DeWeese, Posy Robertson, Stu Jacobsen, and Dianne Roberts. For more information, please email plan@aluuc.org or call Carol at 217-528-9803 (leave a message) or Debby at 217-793-8810.

ALUUC Long Range Planning 2016 Steps

1. Cottage Groups: March, April, May

Sharing stories.

Themes and actions: what ALUUC does well.
10-20 year visions.



2. Long Range Planning Committee: June

Creates strategic visions:
big-picture strategic plans.

	A	B
1	Qty	5000
2	Rate/Min	2
3	Minutes	2500
4	Start	2013-09-20 15:3
5	End	=?



3. Board, committees, staff input:

July, August, September

Board, committee chairs, minister and staff review and comment on strategic visions and suggest goals to implement them.



**WE ARE
HERE**

4. Congregation input: October

Sunday service to present strategic visions, which are posted; congregation suggests goals to implement them.



5. Long Range Planning Committee: October

Merges all goals to creates list of possible goals to implement our strategic visions.



6. Congregational Meeting & Goal Priority Voting:

November

Affirm our strategic visions; prioritize goals.

ALUUC Goal Priorities	
Option 1	● ● ●
Option 2	● ● ●
Option 3	● ● ●
Option 4	● ●
Option 5	●



Implement Goals, Evaluate Progress, Plan

Complete prioritized goals; consider remaining goals, plan again.



Long Range Planning Cottage Group Input Session Moderator Script

Room Setup

1. Arrange chairs in a circle. Include a chair for scribe & moderator.
2. Ask participants to sign-in & to use name tags. Ask to silence cell phones.
3. Give each participant **paper with questions** and a pen / pencil.
4. Set up flip chart with markers where everyone can see it. The scribe should use the chart to record responses. **Scribe should label at least 5 sheets at top with:**
Location – Date – Moderator Name or Initials
Q1 – Important, Q2 – Stories, Q3 – Themes & Q4 – Actions (one sheet), Q5 – Visions (at top)
5. Set up chalice & matches.

Sign in sheet, name tags, paper w questions & pens, handouts, easel, flip charts, markers, chalice & matches, food & drinks.

Start on time at Noon

noon-12:10pm Get food, settled, introduction, Long Range Planning, and Today's Workshop

Please turn your cell phones to silent.

Welcome and thank you for coming to this important input session for long range planning for ALUUC.

Our Mission Statement defines our purpose as a congregation and answers the question: "What is Life calling ALUUC to be in the world?" This powerful question challenges us to consider who we are, who we serve, what future we envision, and where living our core values will take us.

Our Mission Statement is as follows:

The Abraham Lincoln Unitarian Universalist Congregation is a religious community of individuals coming together for spiritual growth and fellowship.

- We shall through our fellowship nurture and support each other both in our human needs and in our search for spiritual fulfillment.
- We shall provide a place for learning and the sharing of values and memories within and between generations.
- We shall seek to guide the next generation in its search for meaning.
- We shall strive to maintain a diverse membership that respects differing views.
- We shall foster non-violent action in the interest of justice, honesty, and understanding in our community and world.

Thus, shall we serve as a visible example of a tolerant religious community welcoming others to join.

Light the Chalice

Let us light our chalice, that we may trust one another's wisdom and vision. May we also be guided by imagination, creativity, and courage.

Importance of Long Range Planning

Long Range Planning is important for organizations. **Without a shared vision, we risk drifting and being pulled in directions that don't represent shared goals.**

Our Long Range Planning Process

The planning process we are following has 2 important concepts:

- Getting as much input from members and friends of the church as possible, and
- Building on strengths instead of focusing on weaknesses and negatives.

There are multiple steps to our process, and we'll be asking for your input today and several more times:

1. These cottage groups are an opportunity to tell stories about ALUUC, create shared meaning, and identify the strengths we already have and could use to create our future together.
2. From this cottage group input, the Long Range Planning Committee will create provocative propositions. Provocative propositions are strategic plans that are do-able but challenging.
3. We will bring our strategic plans back to you, and you'll be able to comment on them and suggest specific goals to implement the plans.
4. From your suggestions, the LRP Committee will create a list of specific goals.
5. We will hold a congregational meeting to affirm the provocative propositions (strategic plans) and to prioritize the list of goals.

Over the next several years, the congregation will implement the prioritized goals. Progress on the plans and goals should be evaluated every year, and in the future we may decide to begin to implement some of the remaining goals – or to update our long range plans.

Today's Workshop

Today you will be sharing what's most important to you about ALUUC, and then we'll ask you to tell us a story about ALUUC. Next we'll group our stories into themes. Based on our themes, we'll bring our themes to life with actions that illustrate those themes. Finally, we'll share our visions for the future.

We have a lot to cover, and I want to honor the time commitment you have each made to this process today and keep it to 2 hours. I also want to be sure everyone has an opportunity to contribute.

I want you to be aware that I may have to re-route attention back to the agenda. Please know that your input is valuable, and please don't take it personally if I need to redirect discussion to keep us on agenda. We are not here to fix specific problems or to talk about individual wants. We are here to express gratitude for our congregation's strengths and to build on those toward an exciting future.

If participants start talking about complaints, concerns, and specific fixes, make it clear that these concerns and ideas are heard, they are being recorded, and they may ultimately have a place in the ALUUC of the future. But in order to respect the group's goals for this exercise, we need to turn back to the agenda. Scribe has a sheet to note these things, but without a title to avoid suggesting such. COAT: caring, openness, appreciation, trust; suggest talk after; miracle question.

12:10-12:40pm

Please pair up with a partner, preferably someone you don't know well. You will share with your partner for half the time, then switch and your partner will share with you. When we're done sharing with each other, you will summarize what your partner said to the group, and our scribe(s) will write it down. I'll be timing you and telling you when to switch. Each of you has 2 minutes to talk.

Q1. Tell your partner how you became involved with ALUUC - what keeps you coming back?

TIME WITH STOPWATCH!

2 minutes, then switch. 2 minutes, then end. Warnings after 1.5 minutes.

Share with group 2 minutes each = 20 minutes to share with group.

Scribe: note comments without names – number sheets “Q1 – Important”

12:40-1:10pm

Again, pair up with your partner. You will have 2 minutes each and then will tell your partner's story to the group.

Q2. Tell a brief story about a moment when you were especially proud of ALUUC or most grateful to be a member. Mention who else was involved

TIME WITH STOPWATCH!

2 minutes, then switch. 2 minutes, then end. Warnings after 1.5 minutes.

Share with group 2 minutes each = 20 minutes to share with group.

Scribe: note comments without names – number sheets “Q2 – Stories”

Past themes (don't use this unless you need to get the group started)

Children, ALUUC community, community outreach, feminine divine, growth, leadership, ministerial leadership, open & accepting / many spiritual paths, sermons / inspiration, social justice, UU values

1:10-1:15pm Brief Break

1:15-1:30pm

Q3. How can we group our stories into themes?

15 minutes – group helps to group each of the 20 stories above into larger themes.

Scribe: number sheets “Q3 – Themes”; leave lots of room for actions!

1:30-1:45pm

Q4. From the themes we've identified, what are some actions that illustrate each theme? Actions could be initiated by a person, a process, a policy, a group, an organization or a role in the church (committee chair, minister, board.)

15 minutes = 1-2 minutes per theme

Scribe: write actions on same sheet as Q3 Themes – below each theme

1:45-1:55pm

Now we're going to talk about the future.

Q5. Take a minute to describe what would you like to hear others say about ALUUC 20 years from now. This is a Genie opportunity, so don't squander your wishes: dream big, wish for what you would dearly love to see happen, wish what our congregation might make possible. Wishes should be as specific as possible and short. Proceed around the circle, and anyone may pass without forfeiting their next opportunity to wish. Have fun with this.

10 minutes is 1 minute per person.

Scribe: number sheets “Q5 – Vision”

1:55-2pm

Extinguish chalice and thank participants

Thank you for your participation in the first part of our long range planning process. We need the participation of as many people as possible, and we ask that you urge your friends to sign up for a Cottage Group.

We will hold Cottage Groups for as many people in the church as are willing to participate. From this input, the Committee will identify 3-6 provocative propositions – big-picture strategic plans that identify the overall direction we want the church to go. You will have the opportunity to comment on those and suggest specific goals to implement those plans. Finally, at a congregational meeting in the future, we'll vote to accept the plans and to prioritize the goals.

I'm excited to discover where you would have us go together.

I extinguish our chalice with a quote from Fredric Muir, the senior minister of the UU Church of Annapolis, Maryland.

Take great care, friends and colleagues. The dawning future waits. Yes, the path is challenging, it will often feel like the wind is not at our backs but blowing straight and hard on us. So let us remember, this is a journey not to be taken alone... Let us take this journey together. We can dance and sing, laugh and cry, work hard to re-story, re-imagine, and rehearse the poetry of our roots. The promises of tomorrow are so bright.

Thank the scribe!

Photograph the sheets for future data entry, but also save sheets just in case!

Hand out stickers for nametags that indicate the person has participated in a Cottage Group.

Hand out the overview of the LRP process.

Scribe Tasks

Prep

Post sign on door, name tags, paper & pens, handouts, easel, flip charts, markers, chalice & matches, food & drinks

Room Setup

- Arrange chairs in a circle.
- Ask participants to sign-in & to use name tags, give each participant paper and a pen / pencil. Ask to silence cell phones.
- Set up flip chart with markers where everyone can see it. The scribe should use the chart to record responses.
- Label at least 5 sheets at top with:
Location – Date – Moderator Name or Initials
- Set up chalice & matches.
- Write legibly
- Write large enough for participants to read

Q1: Tell your partner how you became involved with ALUUC - what keeps you coming back?

Label sheets at top "Q1 – Important"
Note comments without names

Q2: Tell a brief story about a moment when you were especially proud of ALUUC or most grateful to be a member. Mention who else was involved

Label sheets at top "Q2 – Stories"
Note comments without names

Q3: How can we group our stories into themes?

Label sheets at top "Q3 – Themes"
Leave lots of room for actions between themes!

Q4: From the themes we've identified, what are some actions that illustrate each theme? Those could be individual, group and/or organizational.

Actions can be written on the Q3 sheet after each theme identified in Q3.

Q5: Take a minute to describe what would you like to hear others say about ALUUC 20 years from now?

Label sheets at top "Q5 – Vision"
Note comments without names

Photograph the sheets for future data entry, but also save sheets just in case!

Introduction to Goals Input for Board, Staff, Committees

Process overview

Phil & Martin asked us to lead long range planning effort & engage consultant.

Original consultant (Thom Thomas) November; current consultant (Steve Mennerick) January.

They recommended using a process called Appreciative Inquiry, which has been used by congregations in St. Louis & Champaign / Urbana and other UU congregations as well as other denominations, business.

We are using a modified version of the process. Most imp aspects of the process:

- The process intentionally avoids focusing on problems because focusing on the negative tends to create more negative. So if you don't focus on problems, what do you do?
- The process we're using recognizes and celebrates aspects of the congregation that currently work well.
- Builds on the strengths of those successes and the talents and skills that made them happen.
- Encourages widespread participation by the community so as many people as possible have input to and ownership of the visions and goals.
- Creates positive energy and enthusiasm that carry over to help us successfully implement the goals with needed resources such as money, volunteers, creativity.

Timeline update

- Handout: Nov-Jan – consultants & initial planning; Feb & Mar – cottage groups; Apr-Jun – strategic visions; July-Sept – goals input; Oct – Sunday service & more goals; November – congregational meeting to affirm strategic visions & prioritize goals for next couple years

Strategic Visions

- Was “provocative propositions” – we changed it due to ongoing misunderstanding about the verbiage; more immediately understandable as “strategic visions”.
- Committee created:
 - Cottage Group input about what we appreciate about the past, what we do well, and visions for the future.
 - Represents 3 months' time and effort.
 - Committee considers them nearly complete and not open to extensive revision, but we welcome comments for the committee's consideration.

- **Most important:**
 - Meaningful to the community from which it originates
 - Grounded in the best of the past
 - Describes a challenging but achievable future
- **Intentionally written in the present tense: initially sports research:** athletes more successful who visualize the final result as if it has already happened. Applied to business and non-profits to help organizations realize their visions and accomplish their goals. The committee struggled with this concept, but I encourage you to embrace the possibility that by stating our vision as if they were already happening, we are already starting to take action to create our future.
- Reading of strategic visions – Debby & Carol.
- Comments on strategic visions.

Goals

- Sample goals are based on visions for the future from cottage groups.
- Committee will solicit goals from board, staff, committees (Aug 28 & Sept 28), and congregation (Oct 23).
- Committee will merge all goals into about 5 goals for each strategic vision.
- Each goal implements an aspect of a particular strategic vision.
- Goals for each vision to be chosen within next 5-10 years.
- Congregation will vote on priorities for the next year or two at a congregational meeting on Nov 13.
- We are asking for goals now because you might not have participated in cottage groups, because we didn't request specific goals during cottage groups, or you may have additional ideas for goals.
- Unlike strategic visions, we encourage you to add your goals, to expand our sample goals, or to help us make them SMARTer.
- SMART goals – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant to our strategic vision, and time bound.
- Oppty to discuss/plan goals month. Add goals today? Record them.

Next Steps

- Goals from committees on Sunday, Sept 25.
- LRP Committee will merge goals gathered by Oct 23.
- Sunday service Oct 23: present strategic visions & goals so far; solicit additional goals from congregation.
- Committee will merge new goals into full list of goals for next 5-10 years.
- Congregational meeting Nov 13: vote to accept Strategic Vision; priority vote on goals for next couple of years.

Thank you

ALUUC – Long Range Planning Goal Workshops – Handout

Process overview

Appreciative Inquiry process recommended by consultants, modified to fit ALUUC needs.

Most important:

- Avoids focus on problems
- Recognizes and celebrates past successes and what works well
- Builds on congregation strengths, talents and skills
- Encourages participation, input, ownership by the entire community
- Creates positive energy and enthusiasm to implement goals

Timeline update

Strategic Visions

- Committee created future vision based on Cottage Group input
- Nearly complete; not open to extensive revision
- Most important:
 - Meaningful to ALUUC
 - Grounded in the best of the past
 - Describes a challenging but achievable future
- Present tense: by stating our vision as if it is already happening, we are already taking action to create our future
- Comments on Strategic Visions

Goals

- Sample goals are based on visions for the future from cottage groups.
- Committee will take goals from board, staff, committees and congregation and merge into about 5 goals for each strategic vision.
- Result: list of goals to be considered for action within next 5-10 years.
- Congregation will vote on priorities for the next year or two at a congregational meeting on Nov 13.
- Encourage adding goals, expanding sample goals, SMARTer goals.
- SMART goals – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant to our strategic vision, and time limited.
- Goal input from staff, from committees.

Next Steps

- Committee gathers goals from committees from 8/28 and 9/25.
- Committee will merge goals gathered before Oct 23
- Sunday service Oct 23: present strategic visions & goals so far; solicit additional goals from congregation
- Committee will merge new goals into full list of goals
- Congregational meeting Nov 13: accept visions; prioritize goals

SMART goals are

Specific

What is the specific goal?

How big is it?

What does it look like?

Who needs to be involved to accomplish this?

Where will it happen?

Why is it important?

What are the essential requirements?

Measurable

How will we know when it is accomplished?

Action-Oriented

Start with an action verb:

Create, research, write a report, present, organize an event, hire a consultant.

Realistic

Is it do-able?

What additional resources might be needed to accomplish it?

Planning, fundraising, developing processes or skills, engaging volunteers, holding ourselves accountable, or bringing in outside help.

Time-bound

What is the date we'll finish this goal?

ALUUC Long Range Planning Timeline

Nov, 2015 – Feb, 2016 Planning and Process

Consultants from MidAmerica Region recommended a process that:

- Avoids a focus on problems, instead recognizing and celebrating past successes and what works well.
- Builds on congregation strengths, talents and skills.
- Encourages participation, input, and ownership by the entire community.
- Creates positive energy and enthusiasm to implement goals.

March, April, May, 2016 Cottage Groups

In structured small group meetings, we shared stories, themes, and actions; lifted up what ALUUC does well; and shared our dreams for ALUUC's future.

June, 2016 Create Strategic Visions

- The Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) created strategic visions based on Cottage Group input.
- Our Strategic Visions are meaningful to ALUUC, grounded in the best of the past, and describe a challenging but achievable future.
- Stated in the present tense, as if they are already happening, our visions are already changing us and preparing us to actively create our future.

July, August, Sept, 2016 Board, committees, staff input

- The LRPC met with board, church staff and committees to review and consider comments on Strategic Visions.
- Board, church staff and committees submitted specific goals to implement our Strategic Visions and to be considered for action within next 10 years.

October 23, 2016 Future of ALUUC Sunday Service

The LRPC presents ALUUC's Strategic Visions and draft goals for implementation and invites additional goals from the congregation.

November 13, 2016 Congregational Meeting

- Members vote to accept our Strategic Visions.
- The congregation prioritizes goals for next 18 months.

December, 2016 Goals and Report

- The Board decides how many top goals to start within the next 18 months.
- The LRPC reports on long range planning results and process.
- Remaining goals are retained for future action; an ongoing long range planning process keeps us focused as goals are completed.

ALUUC Long Range Planning Strategic Vision

The ALUUC Long Range Planning Committee presents five Strategic Visions as statements of our intent for the future of our community. Grounded in our recollections of the best of ALUUC, expressed in these visions is much of what we love about our community. Because they are inspired by our visions of the future, they are aspirations for what ALUUC could become. Stated in the present tense, they inspire us to envision *now* what we will become and serve as a reminder of our intent and a yardstick for our progress.

Our Strategic Visions will be made real over time by prioritizing and implementing our goals.

#1 Inreach to the congregation

We are an inclusive, diverse Unitarian Universalist community that cares for all members and friends, with loving intent and in covenant of right relations, consistent with our welcoming and accepting beliefs and those of our denomination.

#2 Outreach to the larger community to share our welcoming and accepting beliefs and our pursuit of social justice

We promote and follow Unitarian Universalist beliefs and principles through the practice of an exciting, energetic and well-organized social justice, social action, and environmental mission that engages the passion of our members/friends and attracts others to join us in making the world a better place. As a UU congregation located in Illinois' seat of government, we take advantage of the opportunity to influence public policy in ways that reflect our mission.

Together with other community organizations, we serve as a resource to the wider community on social justice and environmental issues.

We offer an accepting and welcoming home so that others feel free to join us and express the fullness of their gifts and ways of being in the world.

#3 Personal growth through enrichment programming

We provide a provocative and exciting enrichment program for all ages through engaging and thought-provoking experiences for participants. Through these programs, we share our values with the wider central Illinois community.

Our religious education program for children and youth is high-quality and consistently well-attended. It serves as a primary appeal for new families. Our programs educate our children and youth about other cultures, religions and ethical ways of being in the world.

#4 Meaningful, life-affirming and life-changing services

We create meaningful, life-affirming and life-changing services to educate, to provide comfort, and to celebrate life's transitions, such as Sunday and other worship services, weddings, memorial services, and child dedications. These services, inspired by our beliefs and principles, integrate a wide variety of topics, including social justice, environmental concerns, and personal and spiritual growth.

#5 Stewardship

We are careful stewards of our physical and spiritual assets. We make wise, intentional choices about using our staff / volunteer time and talents, as well as our financial assets and property in ways that support our mission and strategic direction. We preserve and use our assets to maintain our presence for future generations of UUs in central Illinois. Our employment practices are consistent with our values of inherent worth and dignity.

ALUUC Long Range Planning Goals - Ballot for Multi-voting

You have 5 dots to identify your personal priorities from the following 17 goals. All goals will be retained for future consideration. The goals with the most dots/votes will be prioritized to begin implementation in the next 18 months.

IMPORTANT! If you put more than 2 dots on a goal, the additional dots won't be counted. If you take your ballot with you, your goal priorities WILL NOT count!

Strategic Vision #1 Inreach to the congregation

	1. Mission Statement: Review, and rewrite as necessary, to determine if the Mission Statement reflects the current beliefs of the congregation and is brief enough to remember and share with one another and the larger community.
	2. Increase effort to make ALUUC a Truly Welcoming Congregation: Increase diversity of membership and representation throughout our community, particularly within leadership of ALUUC. Review and update bylaws for inclusion (gender neutral language, sensitivity, etc.) Review church practices and identify and implement changes to be more Welcoming. Host a community workshop on classism within one year, based on www.uuclassconversations.org and invite nearby UU congregations to participate; fund the effort with registrations and support from ALUUC's budget. (NOTE: The broader definition of a Welcoming Congregation, as approved by the Board in April, 2016, is "We affirm and promote the full participation of persons in all our activities and endeavors without regard to race, religious/non-religious persuasion, color, gender, physical or mental challenge, political persuasion, affectional or sexual orientation, class or national origin.")
	3. Membership Coordinator: Expand current Membership Coordinator responsibilities and work hours to: 1. Re-integrate members who no longer participate and encourage continued participation for current members and friends, 2. Integrate new members into the ALUUC community, and 3. Identify and grow new leaders to serve the ALUUC community.
	4. Transportation to church: Evaluate needs and plan transportation to ALUUC for those who need it. This could be through Uber, taxis, providing a driver and van, or organizing volunteers.

Strategic Vision #2 Outreach to the larger community to share our welcoming and accepting beliefs and our pursuit of social justice

	5. Paid advertising: Create a marketing campaign with paid advertising, using budgeted funds, targeted to the community-at-large to bring our message of acceptance, inclusiveness and support of many spiritual paths to those who need it. The campaign will include evaluation of results that are used to refine future campaigns.
	6. Social Justice Coordinator: Create a professional position to coordinate social action and social justice programs. The Coordinator will work with adult and youth volunteers to strengthen the engagement of members and friends of the congregation in social justice activities.
	7. EcoCamp: As part of our social justice and environmental stewardship emphasis within the congregation, recognize EcoCamp as one of ALUUC's signature community projects; allocate a budget line to fully fund camp activities, estimated at \$4k/year.
	8. Springfield Community-Wide Children's Choir: If a Children's Choir is organized at ALUUC, it will be expanded to the broader Springfield area to offer Children's Choir across different congregations; partner with the Faith Coalition for the Common Good.
	9. Speaker Events: Create a Public Speakers Program and invite well-known speakers on topics of interest to the wider community and nearby UU congregations with a goal of sharing our values and our commitment to social justice and environmental stewardship.
	10. International Mission: Expand our mission internationally by renewing contact with our partner church in Transylvania and the UU Partnership Church Council.

Strategic Vision #3 Personal growth through enrichment programming

	<p>11. Lifespan Enrichment Programming / Religious Education: Expand ALUUC's RE program to educate all ages, including regularly scheduled adult enrichment programming such as UUA-based adult curriculum and classes as well as workshops, guest speakers, chalice groups and circles, a writer's group, an art group, a poetry group, and other small group ministries. Employ a full-time credentialed Director of Religious Education (DRE) for both children and adult enrichment programming, with compensation in accordance with the UUA guidelines.</p>
	<p>12. Our Whole Lives (OWL) Lifespan Sexuality Education: Expand OWL as part of the current Religious Education curriculum rotation at all grade levels (with Unitarian Universalism and World Religions), including adult OWL seminars and workshops. Train more OWL facilitators for K-12th grade and adult and purchase additional OWL curriculum.</p>

Strategic Vision #4 Meaningful, life-affirming and life-changing services

	<p>13. Increase and enrich our music experience: Develop an expanded choir that sings more frequently. Include more instruments in our current musical performances. Expand songs for Sunday congregational singing. Implement a children's choir with scheduled rehearsal and performance times coordinated between the Religious Education Committee, the Choir Director and the Program Committee. Expand the responsibilities and work hours of the Music Director.</p>
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Strategic Vision #5 Stewardship

	<p>14. Facility Cleaning, Setup, Maintenance: Employ a sexton, charged with maintenance of our buildings, to work in conjunction with volunteers to ensure the continued operation and upkeep of the church, including the oversight and coordination of the use of the property by the community.</p>
	<p>15. Facility Funding: To ensure maintenance of the existing facility and to continue investment in the original "Field of Dreams" building plan, the annual ALUUC budget beginning July 1, 2017 will include in the Finance section a special "Capital Development" line item equivalent to the amount allocated for mortgage payments scheduled to lapse in January 2018. Increase the annual budget for facilities maintenance, with the amount to be determined by the Finance and Facilities Committees, for large maintenance and other needs. This will help us to live more comfortably in our current building.</p>
	<p>16. Expand Current Facility: Plan to expand our current facility, including a sanctuary designed to serve 400 people and provide a more contemplative environment appropriate for and dedicated to events, including worship, memorial, wedding, and community services. The plan should be inspired by the original "Field of Dreams" building plan. Utilize our current worship space as a multi-purpose fellowship hall where various activities, including food service, could be held, free of the necessity for volunteers to frequently rearrange the space for Sunday and other services. Additional functionality would include: expanded office space for our increasing staff needs, expanded space dedicated exclusively as RE classroom, storage and meeting room space; a choir practice room to allow the choir to practice uninterrupted as congregation is entering sanctuary for service; and up-to-date A/V technology and computer networking infrastructure.</p>
	<p>17. Expand sustainable practices for our facility: Build awareness about the importance of using fewer resources and being responsible and mindful of the choices we make, including implementing energy-saving recommendations from our energy audit, purchasing recycled products and environmentally friendly cleaning products, continuing to develop our prairie with signage and a path for meditation, expanding the solar power array, installing low-flow toilets, researching a small wind generator, and being prepared to replace our aging HVAC system with a more efficient model when the current ones reach the end of their life.</p>

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

December 2016

ALUUC Long Range Planning

Thanks to everyone who attended the congregational meeting to vote to support our Strategic Visions and prioritize goals. The committee is currently counting goal priorities, which will be provided to the Board for their December meeting, when they will consider the prioritized list of goals and decide how many of the top goals can be started within the next 18 months. The LRP Committee will issue a report by the end of the year with the strategic visions, 18 month goals, future long-range goals; committee and board goals, cottage group comments, and an overview of our process.

For more information

Long Range Planning Committee Members: Co-Chairs Debby Hagan and Carol Kneedler, Gwen Childs, Kurt DeWeese, Posy Robertson, Stu Jacobsen, and Dianne Roberts. Email plan@aluuc.org or call Carol at [217-528-9803](tel:217-528-9803) (leave a message) or Debby at [217-793-8810](tel:217-793-8810).

November 2016

ALUUC Long Range Planning

Thanks to everyone for the wonderful turnout for our Long Range Planning Sunday service. In case you missed it, you can **view a video of the service here**. (link bold text to Youtube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLVT55xhWVNsdcmiBHF1wm0sczneMNaYJ&v=bfJXlvixhPE>)

Download the five Strategic Visions for ALUUC that were created from your Cottage Group input. (link bold text to <http://www.aluuc.org/togetherweshare/wp-content/uploads/ALUUC-strategic-vision-2016.pdf>)

Through Nov 6, we are *accepting long range goals from you* that we will use to create the future of ALUUC. You may post them on the whiteboard at the front of the sanctuary. The committee will merge your goals with other goals; the result will be specific goals for each strategic vision that will be considered for action over the next 5-10 years.

On Nov. 6, we will post the FINAL list of goals that we will use to create the future of ALUUC.

Download the DRAFT list of goals that were created from input at cottage groups and from the board, staff and committees. (link bold text to <http://www.aluuc.org/togetherweshare/wp-content/uploads/ALUUC-LRPC-goals-DRAFT-20161022.pdf>)

THESE GOALS WILL BE UPDATED FOR THE MEETING ON Nov 13!

At a **special congregational meeting on Sunday, November 13**, we will:

1. Vote to consider whether to formally adopt the strategic plans, and
2. Prioritize specific goals to be accomplished within the next 18 months.

Please reserve Nov 13 on your calendar - and join us to help guide our congregation's next steps.

For more information

Long Range Planning Committee Members: Co-Chairs Debby Hagan and Carol Kneedler, Gwen Childs, Kurt DeWeese, Posy Robertson, Stu Jacobsen, and Dianne Roberts. Email plan@aluuc.org or call Carol at [217-528-9803](tel:217-528-9803) (leave a message) or Debby at [217-793-8810](tel:217-793-8810).

October 2016

ALUUC Long Range Planning

For this year's long range planning effort, we are using a modified version of the **Appreciative Inquiry process** recommended by our consultants. The most important aspects of the AI process are that it: avoids focus on problems; recognizes and celebrates past successes and what works well; builds on congregation strengths, talents and skills; encourages participation, input, ownership by the entire community; and creates positive energy and enthusiasm to implement goals.

Five **Strategic Visions for ALUUC** have been created by the LRP Committee from your Cottage Group input. If you haven't already seen them as a board member, staff or committee, you will hear about them at the Sunday service on October 23rd. The most important aspects of our strategic visions are that they are: meaningful to ALUUC; grounded in the best of the past; describe a challenging but achievable future; and stated in the present tense (by stating our vision as if it is already happening, we are already taking action to create our future.)

The Committee is working to merge goals from the Board, Staff and committees. At a **Sunday service on October 23**, our consultant, Steve Mennerick, will join us as we share our strategic plans with the congregation as a whole and share goals from the board, staff and committees. That Sunday through October 30, congregation members and friends will have the opportunity to **contribute additional goals to achieve our Strategic Visions**. The committee will merge your goals with other goals; the result will be **specific goals for each strategic vision that will be considered for action over the next 5-10 years**.

At a **special congregational meeting on Sunday, November 13**, we will:

1. Vote to formally adopt the strategic plans, and
2. Prioritize specific goals to be accomplished within the next 18 months.

Please reserved Oct 23 and Nov 13 on your calendar - and join us to help guide our congregation's next steps.

For more information

Long Range Planning Committee Members: Co-Chairs Debby Hagan and Carol Kneedler, Gwen Childs, Kurt DeWeese, Posy Robertson, Stu Jacobsen, and Dianne Roberts. Email plan@aluuc.org or call Carol at [217-528-9803](tel:217-528-9803) (leave a message) or Debby at [217-793-8810](tel:217-793-8810).

September 2016

ALUUC Long Range Planning

The Long Range Planning Committee met with the Board in July to share our strategic plans and collect specific goals that support those plans. In August, the Committee met with church staff and held our first meeting with committee chairs. In September, we will collect specific goals from committees.

At the church service on Sunday, October 23, our consultant, Steve Mennerick, will join us as we share our strategic plans with the congregation as a whole; share goals from the board, staff and committees; and ask the congregation to contribute goals that Sunday and the next Sunday. On Sunday, November 13, we will hold a special congregational meeting to vote to formally adopt the strategic plans and to prioritize the final list of specific goals for the next 18 months.

Please reserved Oct 23 and Nov 13 on your calendar- and join us to help guide our congregation's next steps.

For more information

Long Range Planning Committee Members: Co-Chairs Debby Hagan and Carol Kneedler, Gwen Childs, Kurt DeWeese, Posy Robertson, Stu Jacobsen, and Dianne Roberts. Email plan@aluuc.org or call Carol at [217-528-9803](tel:217-528-9803) (leave a message) or Debby at [217-793-8810](tel:217-793-8810).

August 2016

Process overview PDF (2 pages)

July 2016

ALUUC Long Range Planning Continues

The Long Range Planning Committee is working on the next step of our planning process, creating provocative propositions (challenging, yet achievable strategic plans for the congregation). The board, committees, staff and congregation will soon be invited to provide feedback on the propositions and suggest specific goals to implement them. Long Range Planning Committee Members: Co-Chairs Debby Hagan and Carol Kneedler, Gwen Childs, Kurt DeWeese, Posy Robertson, Stu Jacobsen, and Dianne Roberts. Email plan@aluuc.org or call Carol at 217-528-9803 (leave a message) or Debby at 217-793-8810.

June 2016

No article.

May 2016

ALUUC Long Range Planning Update

The Long Range Planning Committee is working on the next step of our planning process. The board, committees, staff and congregation will soon be invited to provide feedback on provocative propositions (exciting, yet achievable strategic plans for the congregation) and suggest specific goals to implement them. Long Range Planning Committee Members: Co-Chairs Debby Hagan and Carol Kneedler, Gwen Childs, Kurt DeWeese, Posy Robertson, Stu Jacobsen, and Dianne Roberts. Email plan@aluuc.org or call Carol at 217-528-9803 (leave a message) or Debby at 217-793-8810.

April 2016

ALUUC Long Range Planning Update

Why plan?

Without a shared vision, we may be pulled in directions that don't represent common goals. Our planning process is meant to build on past successes and strengths. This way, we will carry the best of what we have been into our future together.

What's Next?

The Long Range Planning Committee thanks everyone who participated in Cottage Groups. All data has been input into spreadsheets and distributed to the committee. The committee will soon be creating provocative propositions (exciting, yet achievable strategic plans for the congregation) based on cottage group input.

The board, committees, staff and congregation will be invited to provide feedback on the propositions and suggest specific goals to implement them.

At a congregational meeting, we will adopt the provocative propositions and vote to prioritize the goals as our next plan for ALUUC.

For more information

Long Range Planning Committee Members: Co-Chairs Debby Hagan and Carol Kneedler, Gwen Childs, Kurt DeWeese, Posy Robertson, Stu Jacobsen, and Dianne Roberts. Email plan@aluuc.org or call Carol at 217-528-9803 (leave a message) or Debby at 217-793-8810.

March 2016

What will ALUUC look like in 2026?

Now is your opportunity to have input into the future of ALUUC!

Why plan?

Without a shared vision, we may be pulled in directions that don't represent common goals. Our planning process is meant to build explicitly on past successes and strengths. This way, we will carry the best of what we have been into our future together.

Why should you participate?

Why is ALUUC important to you? What keeps you coming back? What would make ALUUC even better for you?

Now is your opportunity to contribute to ALUUC's future – we need your input!

Have you attended a Cottage Group?

We are currently hosting 2-hour Cottage Groups, structured meetings where 10 members and friends share answers those questions – and to envision ALUUC in the future. The four sessions on Sunday Feb 28 are full, but we will have sessions on Sunday March 6 and Sunday March 13, plus a special session for Senior Youth and Young Adults on March 20. We also plan to hold sessions for members and friends who can't attend on Sunday afternoons. **Email plan@ALUUC.org to sign up for a Cottage Group.**

What's Next?

From your Cottage Group input, the committee will craft “provocative propositions” – exciting, yet achievable strategic plans for the congregation. You will have an opportunity to comment on the propositions and to propose specific goals to implement the propositions.

At a congregational meeting, we will adopt the provocative propositions and vote to prioritize the goals as our next plan for ALUUC.

Why can't I just tell you exactly what I want?

I just want ...to build a new sanctuary. ...to hire more staff. ...to paint the building red. ...to expand the RE Program. ...to build a garage. ...to expand programming. Everybody wants something for ALUUC, but the challenge is that not everybody wants the same thing.

The process we have adopted for strategic planning encourages you to hear the stories of your fellow congregants—perhaps some you haven't even met yet—to understand their yearnings alongside your own. In this way our process honors our values of diversity of thought and democratic process.

By considering our larger mission, what members value about ALUUC, and the strengths and assets of ALUUC, we can begin to tell a story about what ALUUC will look like in the future. By tying our specific goals to our larger mission and vision – our provocative propositions, we can make the case that a specific want or goal supports our vision. That's important because many of our goals will require money, volunteer time, or both, which will require buy-in from a majority of members. And the energy and enthusiasm created by considering our larger mission - and how we might live that mission in the future - is an important part of making the future real.

Please take advantage of the chance to express your vision for the future of ALUUC now – in a Cottage Group. We really want to know what each of you has to say about the future of ALUUC.

For more information

Long Range Planning Committee Members: Co-Chairs Debby Hagan and Carol Kneedler, Gwen Childs, Kurt DeWeese, Posy Robertson, Stu Jacobsen, and Dianne Roberts. Email plan@aluuc.org or call Carol at 217-528-9803 (leave a message) or Debby at 217-793-8810.

February 2016

ALUUC Long Range Planning 2015-2016

Long Range Planning continues as we anticipate our second planning session in late January.

Goals for the 2015-2016 Long Range Planning Process

- Engage the congregation
- Use Appreciative Inquiry to foster shared meaning around positive stories of our community
- Create provocative propositions that enable us to realize our Mission
- Identify action-oriented goals that support provocative propositions
- Vote on to accept the provocative propositions and to prioritize goals for upcoming year

Update

We've had to change consultants due to health issues with our previous consultant, Thom Thomas. We appreciate Thom's help getting started, and we look forward to working with consultant Steve Mennerick, who attended our first session with Thom. We will continue using Appreciative Inquiry for our overall approach.

Next Steps

Gathering input from the congregation has already begun, and we anticipate that will continue through March of 2016. Look for more information in weekly announcements. From your input we will craft "provocative propositions" – exciting, yet achievable stretch goals for the congregation. In June at our Annual Meeting, we will adopt the provocative propositions and vote to prioritize associated action-oriented goals as our next plan for ALUUC.

Why plan? Why should you participate?

Without a shared vision, we may be pulled in directions that don't represent shared goals. Now is your opportunity to dream with the congregation. In order to work well, the long range planning process needs to hear from as many members as possible.

For more information

Members of the Long Range Planning Committee include Co-Chairs Debby Hagan and Carol Kneedler, Gwen Childs, Kurt DeWeese, Posy Robertson, Stu Jacobsen, and Dianne Roberts. For more information, please email plan@aluuc.org or call Carol at 217-528-9803 (leave a message) or Debby at 217-793-8810.

January 2016

ALUUC Long Range Planning 2015-2016

Long Range Planning continues as we anticipate our second planning session with consultant Thom Thomas in late January.

Goals for the 2015-2016 Long Range Planning Process

- Engaging the entire congregation for input and participation,
- Identifying who we are and what we do well,
- Articulating our vision for the future,
- Crafting a plan the entire congregation will support, and
- Creating an ongoing planning process to support our continued journey toward our vision.

Next Steps

Gathering input from the congregation has already begun, and we anticipate that will continue through March of 2016. Look for more information in weekly announcements and in the February newsletter. From your input we will craft six “provocative propositions” – exciting, yet achievable stretch goals for the congregation. In June at our Annual Meeting, we will adopt three receiving the most votes as our next plan for ALUUC.

Why plan? Why should you participate?

Without a shared vision, we may be pulled in directions that don't represent shared goals. Now is your opportunity to dream with the congregation.

For more information

Members of the Long Range Planning Committee include Co-Chairs Debby Hagan and Carol Kneedler, Gwen Childs, Kurt DeWeese, Posy Robertson, Stu Jacobsen, and Dianne Roberts. For more information, please email plan@aluuc.org or call Carol at 217-528-9803 (leave a message) or Debby at 217-793-8810.

December 2015

ALUUC Long Range Planning 2015-2016

It's been five years since ALUUC completed a long range planning process, and we've seen significant growth and changes since then. The Board asked us to organize a new Long Range Planning Committee, engage a consultant, and facilitate the process. This is the first of many communications from the Long Range Planning Committee to keep you informed and engaged in the planning process.

2005 Long Range Plan

We're celebrating some high-priority victories based on the 2005 long range plan (link to <http://www.aluuc.org/togetherweshare/wp-content/uploads/ALUUC-LRPC-Final-Victories-2005.pdf>) (page 3 has additional details on priorities and victories), including: paving the parking lot (#1); increasing our liberal religious voice in Springfield (#2), organized way of connecting new visitors (#3), increasing financial support for the CRE (#4). Some high-priority items haven't yet been addressed, such as building a sanctuary (#5). (Some 2005 priorities were not easily measured or were in conflict with other priorities.)

How do these past priorities fit into the new plan? We're presenting them here as ideas we might consider as we continue the process, but they won't automatically be included in the new plan.

Goals for the 2015-2016 Long Range Planning Process

- Engaging the entire congregation for input and participation,
- Identifying who we are and what we do well,
- Articulating our vision for the future,
- Crafting a plan the entire congregation will support, and
- Creating an ongoing planning process to support our continued journey toward our vision.

Next Steps

We've already held an initial planning meeting with church leadership and UUA Consultant Thom Thomas. More detailed planning will continue at a meeting in the second half of January. We have already begun gathering input from the congregation, and we anticipate that will continue through March of 2016, utilizing a variety of methods, including cottage groups and surveys. From the input you provide, we will craft six possible "provocative propositions" – stretch goals for the congregation that are exciting, yet achievable. In June at our Annual Meeting, we will adopt three receiving the most votes as our next plan for ALUUC.

Why plan? Why should you participate?

Groups of people who come together need to examine why they are together, how they are together now, what is unique about how they are together, and where they want to go in the future. What are "our" dreams? We are a welcoming congregation, free to follow our own paths to truth. We accept and respect each other. We are a visible example of an accepting loving community. What is our plan to live out our values? If we don't have a shared vision, we risk drifting and being pulled in directions that don't represent shared goals. Now is your opportunity to dream with the congregation.

At the November planning meeting, in response to a question, our consultant said that congregations who have faithfully followed a long range planning process, integrated with intentional capital and stewardship campaigns, have seen giving as much as doubled. Further, he recommended maintaining a long range planning committee as a standing committee to keep us on track to live our mission.

For more information

Members of the Long Range Planning Committee include Co-Chairs Debby Hagan and Carol Kneedler, and as members: Gwen Childs, Kurt DeWeese, Posy Robertson, Stu Jacobsen, and Dianne Roberts. For more information, please email plan@aluuc.org or call Carol at 217-528-9803 (leave a message) or Debby at 217-793-8810.