



Active Congregation History Report

Congregation Name and Address: **UU Congregation of Hillsborough**
Hillsborough, NC 27278-0275
 UUA Cong. ID#: **6710**
 District: **Southeast District**
 Year Organized: **1995**

Historical Statistics

Fiscal Year	Certified Members	Average Attendance	RE Enrollment	Pledging Units	Total Expenditures	Pledge Income	APP Paid	Honor?
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Prepared by: UUA's Office of Data Services

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Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Hillsborough Free-form Snip

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Hillsborough Strategic Plan: July 2019 - June 2021

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Introduction

Throughout the process of developing this plan, our goal has been to capture the issues of strategic importance to our Congregation and to incorporate the issues that other community leaders are facing to see how we, as a faith community, can become more directly connected to the fabric of our locality. The plan is representative of the wishes of the Congregation and community stakeholders and will result in focused activity and measurable gains for UUCH in terms of programmatic offerings, community involvement, membership, and other identified metrics.

This plan is different from and builds on the previous plan. Whereas the last plan encompassed five years, this one is shorter - for only two years. This plan is to be reviewed and approved at the June 2019 Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting, with activation (pending approval) in July of 2019. The rationale for this new approach is threefold:

- 1) We believe that having a more regular process will increase UUCH's agility in the face of ongoing changes in our congregation, and in the community
- 2) The increase in the frequency of the planning process will allow more regular input from our congregants (and others) into specific areas of action and budgetary prioritization
- 3) The change in the start date for the plan aligns with the budget calendar (July 1 - June 30), so that subcommittees will achieve greater alignment of activities and budget allocations.

Some History:

The origins of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Hillsborough (UUCH) date back to 1993 when a dozen Unitarian Universalists who lived in the area began getting together for a monthly potluck dinner. The first Articles of Association were adopted in April 1995 and UUCH became a member congregation in September of that year. In June 1996 UUCH signed a contract to purchase a 3-acre lot, and in January 1999 we held our first worship service in our new building.

During the first 15 years since the building dedication, our membership fluctuated between 50 and 90, often declining slightly when there was a change in leadership and increasing during times of stability. In the past 5 years, with strong lay leadership and stable ministerial leadership, we have experienced a steady increase in members, from 55 in 2009 to 93 currently (2019). See Appendix B for more details. We also have approximately 50 "friends" or non-members who contribute regularly to our community in various ways. Moreover, we have seen an increase in the past 5 years from 12 to 38 children and youth.

In the summer of 2018, the Congregation charged the Governance Council to appoint a task force to develop a strategic planning process. The process included:

- Three cottage meetings in November of 2018, during which key success factors were identified and checked against the current mission covenant statement.

- Situational assessment, including a review of statistics and trends in membership, attendance, finances, leadership patterns, Hillsborough demographics, community leader inputs, and UUCH demographic data.
- An update to the Committee of the Whole (COW) in December of 2018.
- Strategic Plan drafted by the Strategic Planning Task Force and other task force members, with initial review during the March 2019 COW meeting.
- The formation of task forces in March and April 2019 to research identified issues and to develop a recommended set of activities.
- Committee on Shared Ministry and Governance Council will make recommendations to the Congregation-based on results of meetings and task force work.
- Planned final approval of the Strategic Plan during the June 2019 COW meeting.

The information gathered through cottage meetings, external interviews and data reviews resulted in the action areas outlined below. We will also provide an appendix listing the members of the Strategic Planning Taskforce, our schedule of meetings, names, and roles of external community members interviewed, and the timeline of the entire process (Appendix A).

Before coming to the specifics of the plan, it is good to ground ourselves in our congregation's Identity, Mission and Covenant statements.

Identity - Mission – Covenant Statements

IDENTITY – We are a welcoming community of diverse, open-minded individuals seeking spiritual expression, exploration, and ethical growth. We provide a nurturing home in which to work for trust, understanding, social justice, and universal peace. As Unitarian Universalists, we are bound not by creed, but by covenant. The heart of the covenant is the commitment to a way of being rather than to a statement of belief.

MISSION – Our mission is to:

- Partner with the earth
- Embrace justice
- Advance freedom of thought
- Connect in love
- Enrich our spirits

COVENANT – In order to live into our mission, we, the members of UUCH, covenant to:

Partner with the earth by adopting lifestyles that support and sustain the web of life. We will help preserve our environment by reusing, recycling, repairing, and restoring its precious and limited resources, and by reducing our use of these resources.

Embrace justice through service, education, witness, advocacy, and community organizing. We will commit to a congregation-wide service project each year that addresses an issue of social/cultural justice in our community.

Advance freedom of thought by building a religious community that supports each individual's search for truth and meaning. We will find ways to connect with those who might benefit from our message and community and invite them to join us in celebration.

Connect in love by accepting and supporting one another with open minds and open hearts, caring for and respecting each other, sharing our sorrows and celebrating the joys of life together, and working together in cooperation and harmony. We will create a welcoming and diverse community, open to all people without regard to ethnicity, gender identity, and expression, sexual orientation, political persuasion, age, disability, or religious belief. We will embrace our Congregation's Covenant of Right Relations.

Enrich our spirits by making participation in communal worship a high priority in our lives. We will grow spiritually through practices and activities that lead to spiritual maturity, exemplified by greater generosity, compassion, courage, gratitude, and humility.

This covenant is based upon the mission of this Congregation and requires making promises and taking responsibility. We covenant with humility, knowing that we are promise-breakers as well as promise-makers and promise-keepers. We recognize and affirm the need for a community of accountability that will call forth the best in us. We recognize that accountability includes the support of our Congregation by sharing our time and energy, our creativity and imagination, our talents and skills, and our financial resources.

Organization and Governance

UUCH developed a governance model based on "Governance and Ministry" by Dan Hotchkiss to accommodate our growth to a Pastoral sized church. It was implemented with a trial year and has since been in successful operation as of June 2018. Refer to the UUCH Articles of Association and the UUCH Governance Policy book for additional information.

Vision

We, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Hillsborough, envision our congregation in as stronger in the following areas:

Spiritual wholeness: We will provide greater opportunities for enriching

our spirits through study, service, spiritual practices, and meaningful worship experiences.

Deeper connections: We will offer opportunities to develop more authentic relationships and cultivate sincere caring and pastoral care.

Increased diversity: We will more closely reflect the diversity of the community we serve and will foster strong, nurturing relationships with diverse communities of faith in our neighborhood.

Faith development: We will expand our religious education programming for all ages and encourage ongoing leadership training.

Community outreach: We will be known as a faith community dedicated to creating a more just and compassionate world.

Membership growth: We will continue growing in terms of more members and more congregants actively involved in the life of the congregation.

At the 2018 GovCo retreat the following vision was created:

Improve UUCH health of finances, physical and heartfelt space so that we may continue to grow as a nurturing congregational home for personal and spiritual growth from which we manifest our UU Principles in the world.

Based on this vision these goals were developed:

Goal #1: Expand participation in faith development/formation beyond Sunday worship.

Goal #2: Align our facilities, staffing, policies and procedures with our changing opportunities and challenges.

Goal #3: Expand our knowledge of Unitarian Universalism - locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Strategies for Reaching Our Vision

This strategic plan creates the foundation to bring our UUCH visions to fruition over the next two years.

These visions predict UUCH developing in five essential ways.

1. Implementing expansions and improvements of our physical space (Expansions and Improvements of Physical Space)
2. Growing our community outreach and in-reach programs (Faith Development)
3. Develop a Healthy Congregation Team & Conflict Resolution Team (Healthy Congregations Task Force)
4. Expanding our paid staff to better serve our congregation and support our volunteers. (Paid Staff)
5. Creating a culture of abundance to financially support these visions and our future (Resourcing the Vision)

1. Expansions and Improvements of our Physical Space

Why we need this: There was a strong theme of infrastructure needs for UUCH, throughout the cottage meetings and in other feedback sessions. What we also know from research into how congregations grow is that having an appealing environment - from the parking lot to the internal spaces - creates a more inviting space for potential newcomers. There are also some matters related to better serving specific groups within our community (those with various needs - e.g. hearing, vision, ambulatory, etc.). We are also not recommending action related to expanding our current physical footprint due to our numbers (in terms of average attendance) and the research conducted as to what should be prioritized in terms of congregational growth.

What we are doing today: Today we have an active Building and Grounds committee that has reviewed the output from the Strategic Planning Cottage Meeting notes, and has integrated those inputs into their recommendations.

Where we want to be in 2 years: The Building and Grounds team has identified the following areas for improvement, in order of priority. More details can be found in the Appendix D:

1. Improvements to the parking lot
2. Replace older fold-out tables with lighter ones (interior)
3. Set up one of the yurts as a Minister's Office
4. Address interior painting needs
5. Acquire an updated sound system for the sanctuary

How we plan to get there: Detailed recommendations have been provided by the current Building and Grounds committee, and are viewable in the Appendix D below.

2. Faith Development

Why we need this: Our faith identity is what pulls us together as a sacred community. This identity is at our core and defines who and how we are together. However, in a religious tradition that makes room for the individual's beliefs based on personal experience, it is sometimes too easy to lose sight of what we have in common, those basic values that bind us together as Unitarian Universalists. As UUCH grows, we want to ensure that members and friends of all ages have a depth of understanding of what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist, what it means to be a member and leader of our congregation and how to carry our values out into the community.

The faith development of adults, in particular, has not been a priority for our members. We feel that more emphasis needs to be placed on a core curriculum that strengthens our knowledge of what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist, and what is expected of us as members of this particular congregation.

What we are doing today: We have religious education classes for children through middle school each Sunday. We offer a 90-minute session called the *Path to Membership* which is required of all new members and is held at least quarterly. Our Faith in Action Team holds a monthly 90-minute session on the 4th Wednesday evening of each month to discuss moral discourse and action. There is a *Cakes for the Queen of Heaven* group, a group that gathers to discuss filmed lectures on various religious traditions, one Soulful Circle (covenant) group, and a spiritual direction group. Rev. Hanneman leads other evening classes as her schedule permits.

Where we want to be in two years:

1. Beginning in the fall of 2019, we will begin holding regular 45-minute adult religious education programming from 9:30 – 10:15 on Sunday mornings. We also want to investigate the possibility of holding our classes for children and youth at that time as well.
2. Beginning in the fall of 2020, all children would be invited to attend worship, but we will offer child-care during this time as well. Having children as regular participants in worship will expand their knowledge of what it means to be a member of a faith community.
3. Beginning in the fall of 2019, we will expand our current 90-minute *Path to Membership* class to **six** 45-minute Sunday morning sessions. **These would be required for membership at UUCH.** This would be offered quarterly.
4. Beginning in the fall of 2020, we would like to offer the following additional adult classes on Sunday mornings: a five-session class on UU theology led by the Minister; a five-session class on covenantal relationships and the use of consensus led by the Healthy Communications Team (taught twice each year); a five-session leadership class led by the Leadership Committee.
5. Other classes and workshops might be offered at other times at the discretion of interested facilitators, but would not interfere with the core curriculum listed above (3 & 4).
6. We will explore ways in which to monetize some of our programming with fees charged to non-members.

7. We will create as much synergy between the RE programming for children and youth, adult education, worship, and our social justice work as possible. Programming and Sunday celebrations will include honoring those who have accomplished the following rites of passage in our community: Child Dedications, Bridging, Coming of Age, new member orientation, and leadership training at SUULE. We will emphasize that each of these is part of Lifespan Religious Education.
8. We will continue to make the transition from the concept of community engagement as “social justice” work to a relational model grounded in supporting our Community Partners with our time, talents and treasures. This will mean giving up some control and allowing our Partners to determine how we can best support them and be in right relationship with them. This will be an important aspect of de-centering our place of privilege as a primarily white, middle-class faith community.
9. We will strengthen our ministry by 2020-21 to our youth by offering each 10-12 grade youth a staff position at UUCH, not to accede 90 minutes per week. This will be part of a congregational leadership program facilitated by the Minister.

How we plan to get there:

1. The Ministry Council, along with the Leadership Committee Chairperson, will develop the core curriculum as listed above.
2. The Worship Team will work toward providing services that are truly multigenerational.
3. We will change the position of *RE Coordinator* to *Congregational Life Specialist* and suggest a 15-hour/week schedule for this position. This person would be responsible for administrative tasks for all congregational programs (including building use), as well as acting as our liaison with UUCH’s Community Partners. Note: The preliminary report of Red Fern, LLC suggests this position be modified to *Congregational Life Specialist*, which would focus primarily on communications, administration of classes, coordination of volunteers, coordination and support of Neighborhood Circles and Pastoral Care, and coordination of special events, at 5 hours per week.

3. Healthy Communications Task Force

A Healthy Communications Team (HCT) will be developed that will be part of the Ministry Council.

FOCUS

The HCT Task Force recommends that the focus of UUCH’s HCT should be on healthy relationship skills and the education of members about our commitment to live out the seven principles within our congregational covenant with an attitude of consensus and collaboration. This is different than just using consensus at times when we would

otherwise vote. Through modeling, education and coaching of congregants about healthy relationship skills, the HCT will, hopefully, encourage and promote a cooperative rather than competitive culture. For purposes of this document, *Relationships* refers to member-to-member interactions, as well as intra- and inter-team relationships. The team recognizes and will address self-awareness skills as foundational to relationship skill building. The team will strive to develop a model in which conflict CAN BE viewed as a healthy element of a valued relationship and our seven principles are honored at the heart of all resolutions.

RATIONALE FOR THE FOCUS

The HCT Task Force determined that a positive approach (i.e. promoting healthy relationships and skill development through education and modeling) rather than a negative approach (i.e. conflict management/resolution and mediation) was consistent with the mission and covenant of UUCH.

HCT RELATIONSHIP TO CONGREGATION, TEAMS, AND COMMITTEES

Individual members, ministry teams, governance committees, or the minister can approach the team for help in supporting healthy relationships in member to member, inter-team or intra-team challenges.

HCT will decide the extent to which HCT facilitation is appropriate on a case by case basis while prioritizing the option for people to use their own skills to work through conflictual situations with minimal HCT support.

The goal of the HCT members is to advocate for healthy relationship and to remain neutral regarding issues and outcomes. UUCH members, teams, and committees can expect HCT members to avoid advocating for any individual member or team cause or position.

HCT members will be required to recuse themselves from participation in situations where they may be unable to be impartial or in which they have a conflict of interest. The team will also recommend resources for situations that are beyond the scope of the HCT (e.g. mediation, counseling, pastoral care).

4. Paid Staff

Why we need this

Our congregation has relied heavily on the dedication of volunteers; but because of the time and energy demands of work and family lives, it has become more difficult to

recruit, train and retain volunteers to do the many tasks which need to be done and avoid burnout. Much of the burden has been the administrative tasks involved with fulfilling their ministry. Some long-serving dedicated volunteers are transitioning to other commitments. In addition, our needs have grown as our congregation has grown from a Family to a Pastoral sized congregation, now supported by our new governance structure.

We need to increase staffing to not only maintain but grow so as to fulfill our mission as a liberal and justice-oriented community. We believe that staff, as described below, would help with these challenges. In addition, we need to maintain fair compensation for all our paid staff.

What we are doing today

1. We contract with a person for the weekly cleaning of the church before service.
2. We have a full time paid minister.
3. We have two part-time paid child care providers.
4. We had contracted for an RE Coordinator, but because of changed circumstances, and we will not hire a person for that position at this time.

By the 2020-21, we recommend prioritizing the following:

1. Increase salary to appropriate professional level - Music Coordinator (Aviva Enoch) to 6 hours per week, \$23 per hour, for a total of \$7,176 plus \$500 professional expenses (difference of \$3,576).
2. Contracted financial services at \$18 per hour. Budget request \$4000.
3. Continue current staffing of two nursery care providers but increase childcare hourly wage to Orange County suggested a minimum wage of \$13.25/hour. Adding an additional hour on Sunday mornings and raising wages to \$13.25/hr. would change that expense from \$3,171 to \$4,479.
4. We would not replace the RE Coordinator but would have the Congregational Life Specialist do their administrative tasks (budget decrease of \$4,000).
5. Youth positions which would include groundskeeper(s) and three lead teachers. Budget request \$1000 per youth. Note: child safety policies will need to be reviewed and revised before determining if this is feasible.
6. Congregational Life Specialist at \$22/hour for 5 hours/week for budget request of \$6500.

Responsibility

1. Staff positions - Patty Hanneman
2. Contracted financial services - Alicia Volkheimer, Governance Council

5. Resourcing the Vision

The financial infrastructure of UUCH's strategic plan is in our hands. The future of incorporating our faith community into the local community is vitally important. To meet the growing needs of our beloved community, we need to take into consideration

what we can accomplish together. Here are the steps we can take today to resource the vision of our plan:

1. Encouragement of creating our culture of abundance through UUA Fair Share Giving Guidelines.
2. Continue our current capital campaign (The Future is Now) to eliminate our debt and decrease our monthly expenditures. It will also open the door for fiscally responsible expenditures.
3. Start developing a planned giving program by the end of 2019. This enables our members to contribute their legacy to our future.
4. Formulate strategies to make asks of individuals and organizations whose interests align with our social activism.

Appendix A: Strategic Planning Task Force Members and Community Members interviewed for input into this plan:

Task Force Members: Annette Maynard, Rev. Patty Hanneman, Hannah Shanafelt, Steve Mahaley, Linda Seligman, Mickey Reed

Community Leaders who provided input:

Mark Bell: Hillsborough Town Commissioner

Tom Stevens: Mayor, Hillsborough

Corey Root: Programs Coordinator, Council to End Homelessness

Allison Mahaley: Activist, Youth Programs Coordinator at Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

Hillary MacKenzie: Orange County School Board Member

Devin Ross: Principal Organizer, Orange County Justice United

Rev. Deb Cayer: Minister at Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

Rev. Sadie Lansdale: Minister at Unitarian Universalist Church of Greensboro

Meetings and Timeline:

September 2018 - June 2019: Strategic Planning Task Force holds approximately 12 meetings

October 27 - December 16, 2018: Community Member interviews

November 4, 11 and 18 2018: Cottage meetings at UUCH

December 2, 2018: COW update presented

January - March 2019: Drafting of plan

March 17, 2019: Draft shared at COW meeting

March-May, 2019: Task forces formed and begin work, and additional input gathered from the congregation

March 24, 2019: Cottage Meeting for additional input

May 30, 2019: Task force recommendations completed and provided to Strategic Planning Taskforce, and then incorporated into final Plan

October 6, 2019: COW for final approval of Plan

Appendix B: UUA Certification Data

Accessed January 28, 2019

It is recommended that each strategic plan include an updated data set from the UUA. This shows our history of membership, RE enrollment, average attendance, and other financial data.



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Appendix C: Accommodating People with Disabilities

This Appendix is included simply as a resource for any task force efforts related to improvements to our physical space.

Faith in Action (LOFTA) - Pam Dickens presented a workshop about creating safe space for people with disabilities. Participants helped create a list of things we would like to see happen at UUCH. Creating name tags with gender preferences was listed, but taken off the list since we do not believe trans issues fall under the category of disability. However, the group wanted to make sure we were made aware of our preference to address it. Other suggestions include:

1. Large video screen in the sanctuary for words to hymns and responsive readings
2. Large print orders of service (mentioned twice)
3. Large print hymnals (mentioned twice)
4. Giving hugs and smiles
5. Room off sanctuary where you can hear and see worship service
6. Providing rides to worship and programs
7. Training ushers to assist people with disabilities
8. Creating a policy regarding alcohol use
9. Learning to ask people what they need to be successful
10. Welcoming service animals (mentioned twice)
11. New sound system with hearing devices (mentioned thrice)
12. Braille on doors
13. Visual and audio fire alarms
14. Pavement extension for wheelchair and walker access
15. Smooth, safe surfaces indoors (replace carpet to eliminate dangerous transitions)
16. Cordless microphones to prevent tripping on cords
17. Easy-open doors, both front, and back (mentioned by 4 participants)
18. Barrier-free entrance and exit (reduce clutter in the hallway, reduce bystanders/benches around entrance)

Appendix D: Recommendations for Physical Structures

The UUCH Building and Grounds Team was established to maintain, repair, assess, and replace physical equipment and property in response to the needs of the Congregation.

B&G reviewed the collection of concerns in the draft of the “UUCH Strategic Plan: July 2019-2021” (Strategic Plan) and related data (from cottage meetings) and then prioritized each of the items mentioned therein that seem related to “Expansions and Improvements of Physical Space” and have the following responses. They are addressed in roughly priority order starting with the highest.

By far and away, the most important issue seems to be improved parking. It is important to be aware that considerable efforts are currently under way.

The present plan is to repair and rebuild the existing surface, including rerouting of water flow to prevent future damage. Cost estimates for this work include building berms appropriately to control water flow, grade the parking area, and refresh the gravel surface. Estimates for this work have been obtained but are no longer current. A really rough estimate is about \$5,000.

Interest in blacktop paving of the parking lot is clearly high. So is the cost. Detailed estimates have not been obtained, but rough estimates run from \$30,000 to \$50,000. It seems worth mentioning that there is some, perhaps small, cost savings to be realized by going straight to full blacktopping rather than stopping with resurfacing the gravel and then paving later.

Many of the requirements for this paving work will need to be determined by the Congregation. An old plan, dated August 2014, exists and can be made available for review.

The next most important thing B&G feels is to replace the four or five dangerously heavy composite tables with light-weight plastic tables. One cost estimate for them came in at about \$520.

The next most important thing is the setting up the North yurt as the minister's office. This item is small in terms of B&G's effort, but important in terms of Congregational need. There are two areas of work for B&G here:

1. One is the disposition of the furniture presently in the yurt. There are very few pieces presently there that will be retained. The remainder needs to go to the ReStore or to the trash.
2. The other is the cleaning of the inside of mildew. Most of the mildew should go away with the removal of the old, mostly upholstered furniture.

Many concerns were expressed regarding the appearance of the physical space. The issues are being addressed as resources allow.

B&G can obtain cost estimates for professional painting and will consider how much of it can be accomplished by volunteers.

A step-by-step plan to upgrade the sound system with Jenn Hancock (who is on this and B&G is in touch with her). We have asked her what she needs from B&G and she said she will stay in touch with us.

Now to consider things that have already been addressed, would better be addressed by others than B&G, or possibly do not need to be addressed at all.

Handicapped access to the yurts was mentioned. We think the solution in place, a set of portable ramps, contributed by members of the Congregation, serves the need. Handicapped access to the yurts is already available, if somewhat clumsy.

Accessibility to the shed, to the Playground, to the Memorial Garden, and to the Meditation Trail are mentioned in the Strategic Plan input data. Much work has already been done to complete access to the new shed and to the playground, and we anticipate doing some repairs to the fence and to the climbing building in the playground. These items are already on the B&G agenda.

The Strategic Plan input data (from cottage meetings) mention some aspects of our physical space that are subjective in nature (i.e. design preferences). This would require an interior designer or other such expert. B&G will be there to help them accomplish what is needed to implement their ideas.

B&G will help develop policies for accepting donations and for storing stuff in the shed(s). We are keenly aware that improvements in the controlling and storing of items in our available storage space is needed.