



Peterborough Unitarian Universalist Church

Who We Are!

Preliminary Report April 21, 2024

Full report will be available May 2024

INTRODUCTION

PUUC is experiencing a period of strength and growth. We have a minister who cherishes her work with us and from whom we receive meaningful opportunities for spiritual growth. The Governing Board and Committee on Shared Ministry both recognized that we needed a clearer sense of what we as a congregation value and aspire to become.

A 6-member planning team, formed in November 2023, determined that facilitated listening sessions would be an important tool for gathering perspectives as well exposing congregants to diverse points of view. This preliminary report provides an initial snapshot of themes, creative suggestions, shared values and aspirations, as identified by an 8-member analysis team.

THEMES

Q1 Who we are

We are a continuum of lifelong UUs, long-time members, and people who discovered PUUC more recently. Many of us sought spiritual community when raising a family or looked for a UU congregation when moving to the area. Sometimes a specific minister or friend drew us in, or we found something compelling in the Unitarian Universalist principles. What we have in common is seeking a kind, caring community with enriching spiritual values and the opportunity to be of service. We stay because PUUC satisfies our desires for community, spiritual enrichment, service, and intellectual stimulation.

Q2 What we value

The most frequently reported individual values were love, kindness and compassion, followed closely by respect, honesty, justice, equity/fairness, generosity and integrity. Love was the basis of many of the values most frequently stated. The values for the church were remarkably similar to the personal values.

Q3 What we aspire to

The predominant message is that we need more outreach to the community, as many people stated they have no idea of how we are perceived. We are known for our location, our music programs, and the Monadnock Summer Lyceum. We aspire to be seen as a community resource, a venue for non-church groups in collaborative partnership with others in the community. Many mentioned the need to change from "Christian" language to more accurately reflect PUUC as a safe place to explore spirituality in community. We hope to be open and accepting of diverse spiritual beliefs with a strong environmentally aware culture.

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Q4 What we wish for

Responses clustered around eight "big ideas," the first 3 of which were mentioned more frequently.

- 1 More diverse congregation, e.g. ages, families, racial/ethnic, other identities
- 2 More visible and collaborative social justice efforts
- 3 Increased communication and public relations
- 4 Increased music and arts
- 5 Increased spiritual growth opportunities
- 6 Expanded use of building, including accessibility
- 7 Connection and collaboration with other faith groups
- 8 Improved policies and procedures, e.g. covenant and conflict transformation

NEXT STEPS

- April 28** Congregational discussion/Q&A after worship
- May** Full report submitted to Governing Board and shared on website
- May 19** Annual Meeting where next year's budget will be approved
- June 2** Small group discussion opportunities for congregants, after worship
- September** PUUC leadership to focus on priorities
More will depend on your involvement!

BY THE NUMBERS

- 6** planning team members
- 1** trainer
- 14** trained facilitators + notetakers
- 4** questions
- 10** listening sessions
 - 1** session at RiverMead
 - 3** Zoom sessions
 - 3** sessions after worship at PUUC
 - 3** sessions during the week at PUUC
- 8** analysis team members
- 1** outside facilitator for congregational meeting
- 85** participants in listening sessions
- 12** online respondents
- ∞** countless email communications

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