

## **Participant Handout**

### **Making Room Forums**

#### **Background “Making Room” audacious goal**

A couple has three kids and their house is perfect for that size family. Then the kids grow up, each marries and each couple has three kids. That brings the original family, plus their 3 partners and 9 children to 17 in that still small home for holidays and family gatherings. Tight, but doable. Soon though the extended family of aunts and uncles and their kids and grandkids are also now coming for all the major holidays. No longer doable. That in some ways is the early JUC story about our beginnings and growth. Just as that first family grew exponentially, so did JUC. Soon, the original parents, like JUC, added room to accommodate the ever growing family. But then over time, even more and more were drawn into this wonderful family. Extended family and newcomers saw the "family homestead" as a safe place to gather more frequently, provide cross-generational activities, celebrate their good fortune by taking stands in a collaborative fashion on issue they felt strongly about, and perform community service projects that aligned with their common values. While the original couple was proud of what they had created, they saw they could no longer host all of the activities and gathering at their even-enlarged homestead. The choices had become ever more difficult: to stop doing what they were doing so well, exclude some, or even turn people away.

In many ways, this is what we the members of the JUC family are facing, every day, day in and day out. Our current homestead is limiting us in adding new family members, in bringing us all together in powerful ways, and in making impacts in areas where we hold ideals of common purpose. Rather than limit our family to what it is now, limit our impact in what we believe in, limit who can convene for the common good, we are considering the possibility of relocating JUC to a new, different homestead that better accommodates our larger family and potential impact.

#### **JUC “Making Room” BHAG**

Rev. Wendy summed up the Making Room BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal) recently this way and it serves as an excellent introduction for why the Board and Ministers felt it was incumbent upon us to choose this goal at this time. “At Jefferson Unitarian Church, we are Making Room! Our Board cast a bold course of action last fall when it said; by May 1, 2018 we will have a viable plan to free JUC from the limits of our campus in order to live more fully into our mission. It will take Board and Staff leadership, as well as congregational participation to determine the right plan for our church.

Making Room is about our mission, as well as the call to live into the purpose of Unitarian Universalist congregations to be a spiritual center while maintaining a civic circumference. JUC has always taken seriously former UUA President Peter Morales’s optimism that we could be the religion for our time. To do so, however, we are invited to wrestle deeply with whom it is we want to be in this lonely fear-filled time. Clearly, our message which places human dignity and our foundational interdependence with all of life is increasingly relevant. So, we must ask ourselves: How can our church “Make Room” to Welcome All? How can we “Make Room” to Grow Our Ministries? How can we “Make Room” to Engage our

Community? With all of our voices, we will not only develop a viable plan, but we will create a brave and bold legacy that will serve JUC now and for generations to come.”

A couple of notes about where we are in the process:

- We are in the early stages of exploring all options that exist for us beyond our current facility with the assistance of a local realtor
- Ultimately the Congregation will vote on the question of whether we would purchase another facility or land to build a facility
- We have hired a fundraising consultant to help us understand the potential that we might have to raise funds for a potential project. This is a necessary precursor to a capital campaign in the future if a proposal suitable to the Congregation is found

### **JUC mission statement**

**Guided by Unitarian Universalist principles and powered by the energy and resources of its members, the mission of Jefferson Unitarian Church is to nurture our spiritual community, grow Unitarian Universalism, and transform the world outside our church walls**

## Exercise 1

### Draft List of Aspirations to Live More Fully Into Our Mission

#### I. Nurture our spiritual community

IA. Aspiration: Be a net zero carbon facility, in which our building produces as much energy as it uses each year, as 1<sup>st</sup> Universalist church will be upon completion of their energy efficient building that uses a combination of solar and geothermal systems for heating and cooling.

IB. Aspiration: Ensure that we have “room” for all who want to be with us in community as well as adequate space to conduct our programming and for the staff and volunteers to continue to deliver their outstanding service. Sunday morning is not only the face of our church, it is the primary portal through which people enter JUC. It is the core time in which we gather, teach our theology, ‘deepen to our truest selves’, connect with others and are challenge to live better into the values we share.

#### II. Grow Unitarian Universalism

IIA. Aspiration: Welcoming Congregation – We aspire to always have room for new members and those seeking our unique message to deepen to our truest selves, connect authentically with others, and engage with needs beyond our own.

IIB. Aspiration: Accessibility and “Proximity” – Moving to a facility that is proximate to public transportation would ease corresponding requirements for parking, encourage more “green” modes of transport, and make us more accessible to racial, ethnic, class and other forms of diversity.

#### III. Transform the world around us

IIIA. Aspiration: Congregants, in past forums, have dreamed of JUC as being seen as the convener of social justice and the “face” of progressive religion in Jefferson County including elements such as:

- a. Hosting large countywide gatherings with more 300 people with a focus on sustainability, social issues in association with our Together Colorado partners, and with our elected officials.

- b. Being a center of cultural life in Jeffco, through music, arts, and other events that spark conversation and engagement.**
- c. Being able to host UU outreach events, especially musical collaborations.**
- d. We are far from areas of the county with greater levels of racial, ethnic, class and other forms of diversity. It's unlikely that in our current location we can effectively "get proximate" as Bryan Stevenson argues (Author "Just Mercy" & 2017 Ware Lecture) to the issues that we have identified as needing addressing and the people with whom we need to be in partnership and share power.**

**IIIB. Aspiration: Family Promise: Family Promise is a citywide project in which homeless families are housed at volunteer church congregations. JUC houses up to four families in our Mills Building, four or five times a year. Classrooms in the Mills Building are converted to sleeping rooms and the open area is converted into a common room. A new facility would have shower, laundry and kitchen facilities in proximity a set of rooms that could be dedicated as bedrooms for the current families we serve and perhaps serve an expanded number of families.**

**IIIC. Aspiration: Our work with Together Colorado through over 150 one on one conversations has revealed that the most important issues to our members and friends are mental health and affordable housing/homelessness. A new facility would enable us to take a leadership role and host gatherings of more than 200 participants from the many partner organizations in the Together Colorado alliance to address this important issue.**

**IIID. Aspiration: Over the past dozen or so years, we have considered immigration reform to be an important cause in our geographic area. In fact, the idea of becoming a Sanctuary Church has been discussed recently. In December, we raised \$6,400 for the Boulder Valley UU church to support their recent decision to become a Sanctuary Church.**

## Exercise 2

### Draft List of Aspirations and Corresponding Constraints

(These aren't listed in any particular order)

#### I. Nurture our spiritual community

**IA. Aspiration: Being a net zero carbon facility, in which our building produces as much energy as it uses each year as 1<sup>st</sup> Universalist church will be upon completion of their energy efficient building that uses a combination of solar and geothermal systems for heating and cooling.**

##### **Constraint**

IA1. We currently have rooftop solar on a limited portion of our facility. Existing trees and shading make the addition of more rooftop solar a poor choice. Perhaps more significantly, the particular design of our current campus makes reducing energy losses from the building especially challenging. Brick is the structural element for much of the facility and it has a low R-value. We also have what can be described as a “warm weather building design.” That is, our facility has a large surface area/volume ratio, which is noted in the large number/area of our exterior walls which cannot be easily insulated to reduce energy consumption.

**IB. Aspiration: Ensuring that we have “room” for all who want to be with us in community as well as adequate space to conduct our programming and for the staff and volunteers to deliver an outstanding level of work. Sunday morning is not only the face of our church, it is the primary portal through which people enter JUC. It is the core time in which we gather, teach our theology, ‘deepen to our truest selves’, connect with others and are challenge to live better into the values we share.**

##### **Constraints**

IB1. The Mills Building, RE wing and Commons areas are laid out that limit our capacity to achieve these goals:

- a. During the Sunday 11:00 session of **Religious Education** we use every room in the church except the chapel for RE groups. We reserve the chapel for Children's Chapel and large group space. That includes all of the upstairs and downstairs R rooms, and the Mills rooms. During the 9:00 session we use all the upstairs R

rooms and they are packed. We have 250 children and youth registered in our RE classes and have an average attendance of 428/month.

- b. The **basement**, which is used for youth classes and as practice space for various children's choral choirs and Handbell Choirs **is not accessible** to people with disabilities and is not soundproof.
  - c. There are no good spaces for **fellowship** when the weather isn't amenable to hanging out on the patio. This is a particular challenge for parents with small children and elders with hearing challenges.
  - d. We don't have **good spaces for small groups** to meet. Ideally we'd have rooms with couches and comfortable chairs, low tables (coffee tables), and a pleasing look. Our classrooms are large and impersonal. Folding separators not used because sound passes through.
  - e. Many forms of **spiritual practice** struggle because we don't have rooms that are good for them. Particularly useful would be rooms that accommodate more than the rooms in the Mills building, but less than the chapel, but also rooms where an altar, or candles could be set up, where contemplative practices could be engaged.
  - f. **Office space** is inadequate. We are above full capacity for existing staff and we have less staff than needed for a church of our size. Carol, Keith, and Beth all share offices. The one make-shift office (aka 'the gopher hole) behind the reception desk is shared by 3 staff members (Bookkeeper, RE Assistant, and Part-time intern)
  - g. We do not have adequate **space for storage** of supplies, equipment, books, or other resources that support our programs between meetings.
  - h. Parking – we have approximately 154 parking spaces.
    - Parking for any convening of large gatherings becomes a limiting factor to the number of folks that can attend particularly when it comes to accessibility or during harsh weather conditions.
    - The Family Ministry Team would love to do more multigenerational activities between the two services so young families could participate, but the very full parking lot will not allow that. If families stay for the in between time, the 11:00 people have nowhere to park.
- IB2. Our seating in the sanctuary (250 seats plus 50 seats in the "choir loft") and the "round" layout of the sanctuary have become limiting factors for a Congregation with over 800 members in a number of vital aspects of our church life:
- a. Being able to host congregational events where everyone really is urged to participate – congregational meetings, ordinations, installations, musicals, special services including memorials. Often we are forced to seat the overflow in the foyer or in the commons where they are not truly a part of the event.

- b. Sunday music setup is difficult and limiting for musicians when they must squeeze into too cramped a space for worship.
- c. Choir rehearsal area is currently insufficient: choir takes over the entire choir risers and chancel as well.
- d. Further, the demand for our sanctuary space (as the only one with any real capacity for people to gather) is so high for worship, music, and various kinds of forums that the ability to schedule essential community events like Memorial Services is a challenge or requires coordination with other groups using the space before and after.

## **II. Grow Unitarian Universalism**

**IIA. Aspiration: Welcoming Congregation – IIA. We aspire to always have room for new members and those seeking our unique message to deepen to our truest selves, connect authentically with others, and engage with needs beyond our own.**

**Making room for new members.**

Constraint

IIA1. Studies on churches have shown that seating in a sanctuary appears “full” when only 80% of the seats are occupied. This means that our capacity to feel “welcoming” in the sanctuary is actually closer to 200 seats. We exceeded that capacity for 8 services since celebration Sunday in 2017 and 4 out of 6 Christmas Eve services. We are a Congregation of over 800 members, 127 pledging friends (the majority of which are part of a member’s household) and approximately 230 people who are chronic visitors.

**IIB. Aspiration: Accessibility – Moving to a facility that is proximate to public transportation would ease corresponding requirements for parking, encourage more “green” modes of transport, and make us more accessible to racial, ethnic, class and other forms of diversity.**

Constraint

IIB1. We are currently constrained by the fact that JUC is not on any public transportation lines.

## **III. Transform the world around us**

**IIIA. Aspiration: Congregants, in past forums, have dreamed of JUC as being seen as the convener of social justice and the “face” of progressive religion in Jefferson County including elements such as:**

- a. **Hosting large countywide gatherings with more 300 people with a focus on sustainability, social issues in association with our Together Colorado partners, and with our elected officials.**
- b. **Being a center of cultural life in Jeffco, through music, arts, and other events that spark conversation and engagement.**
- c. **Being able to host UU outreach events, especially musical collaborations.**
- d. **We are far from areas of the county with greater levels of racial, ethnic, class and other forms of diversity. It's unlikely that in our current location we can effectively "get proximate" as Bryan Stevenson argues (Author "Just Mercy" & 2017 Ware Lecture) to the issues that we have identified as needing addressing and the people with whom we need to be in partnership and share power.**

Constraint

IIIA1. Our seating in the sanctuary (250 seats plus 50 seats in the "choir loft"), the limitation of seating in the Commons, and inadequate parking for gathering of more than 300 people. For example, at School Board Candidate forum this past fall, people were parked on both sides of Gardenia and illegally on 32nd.

**IIIB. Aspiration: Family Promise: Family Promise is a citywide project in which homeless families are housed at volunteer church congregations. JUC houses up to four families in our Mills Building, four or five times a year. Classrooms in the Mills Building are converted to sleeping rooms and the open area is converted into a common room. A new facility would have shower, laundry and kitchen facilities in proximity a set of rooms that could be dedicated as bedrooms for the current families we serve and perhaps serve an expanded number of families.**

Constraint

IIIB1. We currently need dozens of volunteer slots filled each Family Promise host week to serve a limited number of families and transport people to shower and do laundry. We have inadequate facilities for them to cook their meals and the converted meeting rooms in the Mills Building barely suffice as adequate sleeping quarters.

**IIIC. Aspiration: Our work with Together Colorado through over 150 one on one conversations has revealed that the most important issues to our members and friends are mental health and affordable housing/homelessness. A new facility would enable us to take a leadership role and host gatherings of more than 200 participants from the many partner organizations in the Together Colorado alliance to address this important issue.**

Constraint

IIIC1. Our current space does not allow for meaningful partnership with other organizations focusing on these issues either in terms of hosting conversations or offering services.

**IIID. Aspiration: Over the past dozen or so years, we have considered immigration reform to be an important cause in our geographic area. In fact, the idea of becoming a Sanctuary Church has been discussed recently. In December, we raised \$6,400 for the Boulder Valley UU church to support their recent decision to become a Sanctuary Church.**

Constraint

IIID1. Our current space with lack of shower facilities, kitchen and living space curtails us from exploring the issue further. Thus, we are restricted to serving as the fiscal agent for other congregations (First Unitarian Society Denver and UU Church of Boulder) who are or have actively offered sanctuary.