

UNITY PALO ALTO STRATEGIC PLAN 2006 through 2009

Summary of Strategic Situation:

After several years of change and transition, culminating in a successful year of transitional leadership, Unity Palo Alto finds itself in a strong financial position having sold the manse and paid off all but \$195,000.00 of its debt. In October 2005 the church hired our new Senior Minister, Rev. Karyn Bradley. Rev. Bradley is providing vision, leadership and spiritual grounding and the Board of Trustees has stepped up to lead the congregation and support Rev. Bradley. As we move into a time of consistent leadership and growth, we wish to operate according to a plan derived from our membership, attendees and leaders so that we can function by principle and achieve those goals which we have set for ourselves. This plan will allow us to make decisions about where we wish to allocate our resources, both human and financial, in order to move along the path we have determined for our spiritual community.

We have gathered information in order to determine our strategic priorities for the next three years through several methods:

- Town hall meetings
- Interviews with staff and board members
- A survey of the congregation

This information provides clear guidance to the church leadership and congregation for our strategic priorities in the coming several years.

Mission:

Unity Palo Alto Community Church is a positive-thinking, loving community that contributes to the transformation of the planet through the transformation of the individual....one heart at a time. We teach practical Christianity – living a life of love, forgiveness and spiritual growth – and believe that God is absolute good, everywhere present and within all people.

Focus:

We are a welcoming community that models daily spiritual practice to deepen our connection with God. We do this through programs for spiritual development, education and community building.

Vision:

Unity Palo Alto is the Premiere New Thought Center in the Bay Area. This loving community of Truth Students welcomes all people without exception in dignity and love. We transform lives as we practice and demonstrate Unity Principles by recognizing each person as an original blessing and a unique expression of God Spirit.

Values:

The following values are those upon which Unity Palo Alto bases all its actions. We strive to express these values in all we do and in all our relationships and interactions.

- ✚ INTEGRITY – We make a personal commitment to appropriately expressing our true thoughts/feelings, then acting accordingly**
- ✚ LOVE/COMPASSION – We hold people in high positive regard, listening deeply to them and seeing the Christ in all.**
- ✚ SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY - We create a nurturing and supportive space for transformation into a deeper experience of the Divine.**
- ✚ RESPECT – We value and treat every person as a child of God.**
- ✚ TRUST – We co-create a safe environment through honest communication and responsible, dependable action.**
- ✚ PARTICIPATION – We include and invite everyone to walk their unique spiritual path with us knowing that God is in charge as we co-create and grow a dynamic and loving community.**

Strategic Priorities: 2006-2009

After engaging in a process of information gathering from the congregation, staff, board and a paid consultant, the Senior Minister, Ministerial Executive and Board of Trustees have chosen two priorities to guide the path of our spiritual community for the coming years. These priorities aim to build on the strengths and accomplishments of our church and further our mission to foster individual transformation and the building of a loving and safe community through spiritual practice. Thus, these two priorities will frame the near-term future of our church:

- 1. Create and sustain a premiere Sunday experience every week.**
- 2. Further build a sense of community within our church.**

Goals and Objectives:

These strategic priorities have been further broken down into more concrete, measurable targets through the development of goals and objectives. The following goals and objectives are meant to give more specific guidance to the church leadership in the development of annual tactical plans, as well as for the purpose of regularly evaluating progress in implementing our intentions. Discrete action items towards fulfilling these goals and objectives are not listed at this level, but will be addressed in annual tactical plans as will specific measures of their levels of success.

Goal #1: To sustain and enrich excellent Sunday services for adults and youth.

Objective 1.1: By March 2008, develop high-quality standing choirs for youth and adults, able to sing a broad repertoire of inspiring music.

Objective 1.2: By October 2006, develop relationships with at least two or three professional musical artists and groups whose music is in line with our spiritual message, who will perform on a rotating basis at Unity Palo Alto on Sunday mornings.

Objective 1.3: By July 2007, the music on Sunday mornings at Unity Palo Alto is consistently extraordinary, memorable, and highly inspirational.

Objective 1.4: By December 2007, develop plan to engage première New Thought speakers to present Sunday lessons at least 3 times a year.

Objective 1.5: By December 2006, utilize a variety of methods such as: Dance, drama, testimony, etc., to enhance the Sunday lesson on a quarterly basis.

Objective 1.6: By January 2008, parents of school-age children are excited about bringing their children to our program each Sunday and the youth are enthusiastic about being here.

Goal #2: Each person in the congregation feels a strong sense of friendship and community in their relationship with the church.

Objective 2.1: By April 2007, create diverse portfolio of activities including service projects for the larger community, which excite and engage a large number of the congregation annually.

Objective 2.2: By January 2007, a congregational survey will indicate that a high percentage of the respondents replied “yes” to the question, “Do you feel a sense of community at Unity Palo Alto?” and to the question, “Do you feel welcome at Unity on Sundays?”

Objective 2.3: By July 2007, the following Sunday volunteer teams will be fully staffed: The number of chaplains in the chaplain program will equal 5% of the membership, there will be 8 ushers on the team for each service and 4 on the welcome team for each service, there will be 2 or more Youth Education volunteers for each classroom.

Objective 2.4: By September 2006, a catalog of small group ministries will be published annually.

Objective 2.5: Increase average Sunday attendance by at least 15% per year for the duration of this strategic plan.

Objective 2.6: By August 2006, develop and implement a plan for communicating regularly with the congregation concerning the business of the church and provide avenues for their input and feedback.

Goal #3: Create a comprehensive infrastructure for a ministry based upon the discovery, nurturance and use of congregants' talents, skills and passions (spiritual gifts).

Objective 3.1: By September 2008, develop an educational program about spiritual gifts including spiritual gifts inventories, and at least 3 classes annually on the subject.

Objective 3.2: By September 2008 develop an interview team made up of 10 trained congregants to meet one-on-one with each interested congregant and assist them in identifying their skills, talents and passions and using those gifts to get involved in the church.

Objective 3.3: By November 2008, create written ministry descriptions for all volunteer roles, groups and teams in the ministry.

Goal #4: Maintain and upgrade the sanctuary and other physical spaces to support a premiere Sunday experience.

Objective 4.1: By December 2007, a 10 year maintenance plan, including actual costs, will be developed to first address deferred maintenance and then to stay current with all maintenance activities in the church.

Objective 4.2: By August 2006, create a program to maintain consistent levels of organization and beauty in all physical spaces in the church.

Objective 4.3: By March 2009, acquire and use a multimedia system every Sunday.

Goal #5: To ensure appropriate infrastructure and resources and to allocate and develop them effectively in order to support and empower the ministry to achieve goals 1-4 above.

Objective 5.1: By December 2007, determine what financial funding would be required to fully support and empower the above initiatives, and develop and implement a clear plan to obtain that funding.

Objective 5.2: By April 2007, create and implement a comprehensive plan for leadership development for the staff, board and key church leaders. There will be 100% participation among staff and board in ongoing leadership development.

Objective 5.3: October 2006, all staff will consistently perform at a high level, as measured by their annual performance evaluations.

Objective 5.4: By February 2007, evaluate the full scope of the church's financial systems and put into place policies and procedures to ensure the best management of all financial resources.

Objective 5.5: By September 2008, to develop and provide for the maintenance of a database of congregants and their spiritual gifts: Skills, talents and passions.

Objective 5.6: By December 2006, clarify and document roles and responsibilities of staff, committees, Board of Trustees and ministers concerning governance and management of the church.

Objective 5.7: By June 2006, institute a planning and evaluation process with a yearly survey and yearly tactical plans.

Objective 5.8: By October 2006, the Board of Trustees will perform at a high level as measured by their self evaluation.