

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashville
Endowment Trust Long-Range Plan
November 12, 2011

Background

On June 12, 2011, the Congregation approved amendments to the Endowment Trust bylaws which require the development of a long-range plan. In developing this plan, the trustees first looked at defining the purpose of the Endowment. We noted that:

The bylaws state that *“the purpose of this Trust is to provide for the benefit of the Church an officially approved program for the care, investment, use and spending of gifts and bequests made to the Church.”*

We also looked at UUA guides on endowment and legacy planned giving, as well as a number of other church websites for additional guidance. The UUA Endowment Guide states that *“Operating funds, capital reserves, and endowment funds are three legs of one stool upon which a healthy and mature organization balances its work and service.”*

It goes on to state that *“The purpose of an endowment is to help secure, strengthen, and extend the long-term survival and mission of Unitarian Universalism and your congregation. In very simple terms, an endowment fund is a savings account, a security cushion that can be used to get you through an emergency. In addition to providing a safety net for the future work together as religious people, it can help you today in your common work to strengthen and extend the reach of Unitarian Universalism in your community.”*

It ends, “At its best, an endowment fund further secures an already stable financial situation.”

Purpose of the Endowment

Using these research tools as a guide and our own experience, the trustees feel that the Endowment Trust exists for the following reasons, in no particular order:

- To provide and promote the perpetual financial health and stability of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashville so that it might meet its stated goals
- To promote the legacy of our beloved members and friends in the Church, both living and deceased, and provide a means for doing so, , i.e., to act as a memorial fund as stated by the by-laws
- To act as a security net in the event of a catastrophic event or emergency
- To stimulate and accelerate the Congregation’s financial commitment to the Church for major capital projects by providing incentives and setting examples
- To provide a means by which the Church can do projects which it otherwise would not be able to do by providing periodic grants
- To promote Unitarian Universalism and social justice in the community

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Goals

In general, we felt that the current and past trustees have set us on the proper path and we see no reason to rock that boat. The Trustees have laid out a plan for the foreseeable future with three simple goals:

- To remember and honor our members and friends
- To grow the Endowment via a well-managed and balanced investment policy and donations
- To continue the current grant distribution program

Proposed New Initiatives

The trustees felt that our primary goals were well-balanced and take into account the expectation that the Endowment will grow steadily over the next decade. We do not believe that the Endowment will grow large enough to commit to a modification of our spending policy beyond the current grant process, but we have allowed for periodic reassessment (see last section). We do believe that in order to fully realize our purpose and to better grow and manage the Endowment, we need to concentrate on these major tasks in the coming years:

Develop better documentation of our operation

The trustees have already begun this process. The current initiative will result in the creation of a **“Endowment Trust Handbook”** which can be accessed by members, and more importantly passed on to future trustees. The handbook will consist of the by-laws, this long-term plan, job descriptions of each officer, a calendar, and our policies and procedures.

Do a better job of marketing and publicizing the Endowment and its purpose and goals

This will be accomplished via a number of sub-tasks:

- The creation of a **“Survey”** to assess the congregation’s current level of understanding of the Endowment, their feelings about the Endowment, and their experience and willingness to remember the church in their planned giving.
- The creation of a **“Publicity Plan”** which will draw on the survey to outline when, where, and how we periodically publish newsletter articles, blogs, and website information, when and how we speak to the congregation, when and how we interact with new members, how we work with the ministers to incorporate the Endowment and its purpose into worship and memorial service planning, and how we work with church leaders to publicize the Endowment.

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- Expand our **“Website”** to include more promotional information, such as our purpose and goals, our handbook, and how to make donations.
- Develop a printed **“Brochure”** with promotional information.

Develop a coordinated planned giving program to promote donations

This will be accomplished via the following major initiatives :

- The development of a **“Memorial Webpage”** as part of the Church’s website. This page would include a ongoing endless memorial for deceased members and friends. It would be setup at the time of death and be embellished by family members as they wish. The page would allow friends to make lasting comments and notes to the deceased’s family, and at the same time allow friends to make memorial donations via credit card to the Church’s Endowment. The Trustees envision this page to be presented and operate in a dignified and respectful manner and to be sensitive to the family’s wishes. It is expected that this page would be accessible in general from the Church’s main webpage and that a specific page be accessible during a memorial service. In addition, it could be easily linked via a newspaper obituary and/or funeral home site, emails, or other web-based source of communication. Our hope is that this will greatly increase memorial donations, while at the same time provide a lasting legacy for our departed members.
- Develop a recognition program called a **“Legacy Circle,”** for members who commit to planned giving. Other churches have developed similar programs to recognize members who have made commitments to planned gifts at death. Some of these create categories based on the financial commitment level, however we do not wish to distinguish between donors based on a level of commitment. We see our Legacy Circle as a way to recognize those members and friends who have already made bequests, and also as a way to recognize those in our church who are willing to make commitments to do so in their planned giving. This initiative will include working with the Board of Directors to develop how the Legacy Circle will operate and be maintained. One idea is to create an iconic Legacy Circle pin which can be worn by members, with a larger version of the icon in a prominent place in the church. The pin demonstrates a level of commitment to the Church which can be easily connected to the larger icon.

Promote the use of the Endowment for social justice projects

The vast majority of grant requests have benefited the Congregation. The Trustees desire to make a special effort to promote the use of grants for social justice projects by making sure that the ministers and Social Justice Committees are aware of the benefits of the Endowment.

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Periodic Review & Reporting

The Trustees recognize that, as the Endowment grows, the focus and goals may change, thus we propose a periodic review of this long-range plan as follows:

Annual Review

The Trustees have already established an annual calendar which includes the planning of an annual retreat in the fall of each year. As part of this retreat, the Long-Range Plan will be reviewed. This allows the new in-coming Trustees to familiarize themselves with the purpose, goals, and initiatives, and perhaps question whether these require modification.

Annual Reporting

Progress on this plan shall be reported to the Congregation each June.

Milestone Review

This Long-range Plan will also be completely reviewed, and modified, if necessary, upon the occurrence of any of the following milestones:

- Church membership grows beyond 500
- Endowment balance grows beyond \$500,000 or any multiple of \$250,000
- Significant event in the life of the Church, such as a spinoff, capital campaign, or catastrophe

Approved and Respectively Submitted by Trustees:



Steve Jones, Chair



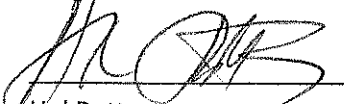
Susan Warner



Ginger Brown

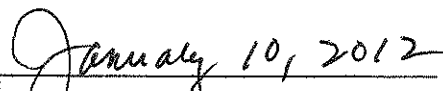


Sara Plummer



Hal Potts

Approved by Board of Directors:



Date

Approved by Congregation:

Date