



Year of Decision

Third Focus Discussion – Overview

- **March 14th, 2006, 6:30 – 9:00 PM in the Parish Hall beginning with a delicious potluck.**
- **All members and friends invited; approximately 40 attendees.**
- **Focus Areas: Aligning Wants & Needs With Resources.**
- **Transition Team presented results of feasibility analysis to answer the question, “Can we realize the goals and desires articulated in the First Focus Discussion?”**
- **Six discussion groups considered questions previously mailed to Congregation.**
- **Transition team identified common themes from all responses (post-meeting)**



Ministry

Given Congregation's desire for maturational and incarnational growth...

1. **Should we commit to increase the number of staff, the hours of our staff, and / or the pay of our staff to assist in managing growing programs, and empower the Governing Board to develop and implement a strategy to meet this commitment in a measured fashion over a number of years?**
- **Board should be empowered to develop a strategy.**
 - **Most strongly expressed desire was for increasing RE staff, administrative staff, and providing for a Volunteer Coordinator.**
- **Congregation will approve increases through normal governance process (i.e. annual budget approval, etc.).**



Ministry

Given Congregation's desire for maturational and incarnational growth...

2. **Should we commit to increase the amount of space available to the Congregation in some way, and empower the Governing Board to develop a strategy for more efficient space utilization using the best recommendations available?**
- **We should make more efficient use of space including exploring recommendations of Presidents' Task Force. We should increase available space as needed.**
 - Most strongly expressed is a desire for more and better space for RE and fellowship.
 - We should explore ideas for better use of the Sanctuary.
- **Board should be empowered to develop a strategy.**
- **Congregation will approve major decisions through normal governance process (i.e. annual budget approval, etc.).**



Ministry

Given Congregation's desire for maturational and incarnational growth...

3. **Should we commit to increase the resource base of our community by increasing the number of members and / or pledges to pay for 1 and 2, and empower the Governing Board to develop and implement a strategy to meet this commitment in a measured fashion over a number of years?**
- **We should increase our resource base (members / pledges).**
 - **Not just to provide resources for more space or more staff but to support all aspects of ministry.**
 - **We should raise level of commitment across entire Congregation – reducing reliance on consistently strong contributors of time and money.**
 - **Church membership should include a clearly defined commitment of time and / or money.**
 - **We should work to increase our membership in a measured fashion to include all ages and family configurations.**
 - **We should preserve our sense of Congregational intimacy as we grow.**



Property

Given that our property challenges are significant but that there are feasible solutions...

1. Should we commit to remain at our current site in Newport, RI and to restore our Sanctuary (including the steeple) as our spiritual home?
 - **Yes, we should.**
 - Many feel strongly connected to Sanctuary as our spiritual home and / or as an important part of the history of American Unitarianism and of the City of Newport.
 - Others feel that alternatives – such as moving to another location – are no less costly.
 - Some feel that we should not do this to the exclusion of our important mission of ministry and outreach.
 - A few expressed the opinion that we should not restore the steeple.



Property

Given that our property challenges are significant but that there are feasible solutions...

2. If the answer to 1 is yes, should we empower the Governing Board to develop a plan to restore our Sanctuary and develop our remaining property in such a way that it provides the Congregation with sufficient program space while leveraging the value of our property assets to assist in securing needed capital?
 - **Yes, we should.**
 - Plan should be brought to Congregation for approval.
 - Big decisions such as mortgaging or selling property should be approved by Congregation.



Property

Given that our property challenges are significant but that there are feasible solutions...

3. If the answer to 2 is yes, do we, as a Congregation, commit to implementing this plan as a community over a period of up to 20 years?
 - Five of six groups stated that we should make this commitment.
 - One group expressed reservations with the word “commit” – opting for the word “try”.