

What values connect your stories and wishes?

The biggest similarity, in the community, the way we are open and accepting. We seemed to all be for a more, wide-spread act or work of good. We all wanted action and to take initiative behind our values and did so. We all regardless of age are personally growing. We feel a part of a much bigger thing and the feeling of “part of the whole.”

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Youth are not our future—they are our present, “the youth support and youth participation.” Youth are part of a two sided coin those who are interested and involved and the congregations that accept recognize as a part of the community. Individuals have the right and responsibility to affect change in the community with initiative. Through youth organizations individual initiative and group activity. Without the groundwork of values it is not possible.

What possibilities for the future?

Reaching beyond just UUs to expand our core values. Also reaching Into UUs. “If youth were involved in and on the board would you want them?” Yes. . . Youth of the NOW are becoming more open “loud & outspoken” as a voice in the UU world.

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Providing a spiritual home and community. We are open/accepting with a covenantal relationship.

Faith in and commitment to democratic process/trust that (working in community) people will do right thing

Commitment to long-term journey.

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Our beliefs—in spiritual quest, in democracy principles and justice.

Our open-ness

Our covenant

What possibilities for the future?

Our message/UUA is very visible/out front. We're respected, not marginalized.

We are even better at providing a spiritual home for everyone—especially more racial and ethnic diversity.

We grow deeper in our spirituality, as well as growing in numbers. Growth/Action based on a deeper understanding of who we are—so we are able to be present to others.

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Cherishing appreciation of differences and commonalities

Power to be in world

Growth

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Needs being met in and by the church.

Freedom from oppression

Institutionalization of values

Non-violent training

What possibilities for the future?

Increase the structural homogeneity within our congregations.

By-law training

Standardize/normalize the governance process

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Increasing acceptance of diversity
Risk of leadership
When we see something that needs to be done, we engage
We see the possibility; connecting and empowering; vision
To give the energy and the time
Willingness to do the work.

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Leadership school
Ideas and support from other congregations.
Board support and trust
Willingness to learn and try new things.
Good organizational skills
Desire to become more involved.
Sense of responsibility
Conscience
Principles—justice, fairness and equity.

What possibilities for the future?

We would all call ourselves Unitarian Universalists
So much more programming for our children and youth—mutual learning and relationships.
Appeal more to youth and enthuse them about UUism (opportunities to meet other youth is not enough—it's an excuse to have fun) in congregations, in districts, at conferences (spiritual UUism)
Safer schools for youth
“Creating community for youth based on spiritual UUism and safety”
UUs know what UUism is—what is our core and our rich tradition?
The public knows what UUism is.
The public expects us to show up.
UUs model participatory democracy in the larger community (and say they are UUs)
UUs overcome racism and homophobia and classism.
UU congregations are diverse (racial and socio-economic)

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Community. Commitment to change, support from the community, bringing people together, fair treatment of people, evolution of the congregation (turn the seed of an idea into reality) empowerment of individuals.

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Openness to exploration of change, support of the congregations for individual actions, leadership of a minister to foster building community and a culture of risk taking, willingness to entertain questions (not only is it OK to ask be encouraged)

What possibilities for the future?

1. We envision a church (and the people in it) where there's an honesty and an ability to say the truth even when it's not going to be openly accepted.
2. Leadership that comes in many forms (people of color, GLBTQ, women, etc.) and when it is a reality we will still want it and be enriched by it.
3. A church (and its people) who has shed its reluctance to be in the middle of the public square (rather than withdrawing into our "intellectual" spheres). (We will need to speak the language of All instead of just the language we know.)

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Stories—the values of being our authentic self, having our own individual voice, appreciation and support of the community, refusal to accept the status quo, honoring the inherent dignity of the individual and the tradition of peacemaking and inclusion and the value of participating in conversations rather than avoiding them—the value of the courage of the cause.

Wishes—

Share and extend our good news into the world being clear about our approach and not having the answers.

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Communal support

Ministerial, board and general lay leadership process—having institutional guidelines kept change becoming personal.

Beliefs as orientation rather than assent to propositions.

Tradition.

The 7 Principles

UU creates a space that allows change to occur.

The existence of the congregation.

Culture that allows us to face suffering through love and action.

What possibilities for the future?

We have an invitation as a way to be in the world.

We work to articulate our core so that we may share it (after we own it).

Double in size because people are drawn to us.

We make a difference in our communities

Fully staffed.

What values connect your stories and wishes?

- √ Valuing our diversity as an asset not as an obstacle
- √ Moral values and ethical compasses are what we have in common, not a specific spiritual path
- √ Stewardship through education (RE), activism, and evangelism
- √ DOING Good, not just talking about it.

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Culture that encourages individuals to research, question, articulate, collaborate.

Team vs. hierarchical leadership

Attitude of affirmation rather than rejection.

What possibilities for the future?

Voice of liberal reason and guidance

Unified denominational identity.

What values connect your stories and wishes?

We need to be more widely seen and our values shared
Diversity in congregations and willingness to support others
Freedom to explore all faiths or religious beliefs
We have a message for others to hear
We begin with our own honesty
Need to be a Beacon Faith—not a Bunker Faith
Stimulus to deepen your own spirituality
Valuing intergenerational issues

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Leadership of minister
Attitudes and culture of the people.
Sense of beloved community

What possibilities for the future?

Desired—Growth, visibility

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Inclusive ethic in UU community of acceptance of all
Empowerment to see and speak the truth
Giving children and adults a sense of worth and dignity
Alignment of belief and action

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Quality religious education
Community of faith
Denomination that speaks truth to power

What possibilities for the future?

Every new member of a UU congregation has at their disposal quality RE resources and mentors
Every UU congregation has an ethic of abundance—we have everything we need
Productive, supportive and strong youth and young adult ministry at all levels—congregational, district and denominational
Every UU congregation is a Welcoming Congregation where each member is free to marry whomever they please.
Interfaith and inter-congregational dialogue and collaboration abound
Larger emphasis on bridging and welcoming of youth into young adult programs
Congregational ownership of social justice principles/actions

What values connect your stories and wishes?

In no particular order:

Respect
Relationship
Valuing
Boundless Love
Support
Community
Trust
Differences
Commonality
Generosity
Finding a home

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

People
Welcoming culture
Leadership (lay)
Beliefs
Principles, in practice

What possibilities for the future?

Actualizing (living the) Principles that influence the greater community and the world.
U.U will be there to heal wounds of racism and prejudice and fear.
Promote a different way of thinking.
Valuing the person in the here and the now.

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Community with porous boundaries

Open and accepting, nurturing and empowering

Sustaining, facilitating growth (individual spirit)

Making a difference in the world

You can count on UUs to . . .

Engaging process of decision-making

Needing the time to include everyone

Creating a safe environment to explore open futures

Unified community

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Synchronicity (Grace) that brings personal experience into communal experience

Personal is part of larger, communal story

Patient, engaging leadership that values everyone's input

Value of being there for people in need

What possibilities for the future?

"Beacon" for liberal values

Risk, even one's life, for social/political values

More growth opportunities

Leaders in sustainability/"green sanctuary"

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Community

non-judgmental

even when times rough there for you—it's supporting

cycle of love and support that's posted forward

Love/Compassion is contagious

Attempt to be inclusive—reach out to accomplish

Independence of all

Education/Learning is core to UUs world view

Want to make difference in world

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

1. Open minds, loving hearts, helping hands

UUs are people who have open minds, loving hearts, helping hands and are talented and able to make world a better place.

2. Negative world leads to searching people

Closed, one-dimensional community leads people to search for a home and we are uniquely positioned to be welcoming.

3. People listen and heed input. Communities willing to hang tough even when uncomfortable issues have to be addressed.

What possibilities for the future?

Empower UUs at all levels to explain who we are in whatever language our listener is comfortable with so that we can effect real change

Help all groups to be warm and welcoming

Continue on our current path important

Put the sources on Broadway

Use the arts to share the passion of our sources.

What values connect your stories and wishes?

1. Unitarian Universalism broader influence in communities and National social fabric.
2. Willingness to address the controversial issues of the times
3. Grow—diverse-wise all ways—keep our values and justice values intact.
4. Small interpersonal connecting is often the beginning of valuable social change.

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

1. Be able to have small groups with good leadership—hospitality
2. The interconnectness of members and the governance group. And the advocacy of the leadership.
3. The principles we have in our faith—help us to take the action and be part of the experiences that we find inspirational.

What possibilities for the future?

1. The general public would be more aware. Name recognition. No elevator speech needed. UUs world become renowned for their social justice commitment and achievements.
2. Speaking out for religious freedom for all—not just Christian.
3. Changing community dynamics around issues of human rights, housing, immigration, environmental and economic justice.

What values connect your stories and wishes?

1. Acceptance for who we are and are becoming
2. Communities, deep community, caring→love
3. Transformation by love and listening
4. Sharing the mystery, birth, alive, death—what does it mean
5. Solidarity→making the connections and act on them

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

1. Shared values; (listening) making a safe community
2. Being open to change and its risk, to allow us to be with whoever and whatever
3. Open to individuals integrating their own spiritual background and growth
4. Commitment to community, even when that means being stretched.

What possibilities for the future?

- * Well-known beacon for people who want communities to realize their dreams
- * That we live in a culture of abundance rather than scarcity; with spirit of generosity; radical hospitality
- * Multi-generational; meet needs of elders/younger people
- * Shared, integrated leadership—all ages are welcome
- * Youth are fully integrated in leadership and decision-making
- * We are leaders in interfaith social action, social justice and worship
- * We partner with organizations that work towards peace, better environmental future

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Inclusivity and acceptance

Community

Support physically and spiritually

Involvement outside the congregation

Responsibility and accountability

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Leadership

People

Attitudes—generosity and compassion specifically

Cultures

Environment—as in outdoors; but also the physical space experiences occur in

What possibilities for the future?

Be the change we wish to see in the world! Create avenues for interaction and collaboration with other faiths in ways that live out our values.

Ex. monthly “eco-meetings” between congregations to discuss environmental issues

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Inclusion, acceptance, love, Courageous words and actions based on UU principles.
Transformation of individuals and society

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Inclusion and empowerment of marginalized people
Personal identification with UU principles
Interaction with minister who was clear about their identity and values
Leadership and principle

What possibilities for the future?

Realization that we can create a different world
Using our “powerful voice” to transform society
UU lobbyists at every State Legislature pushing our agenda
Everyone would know who we are, what we stand for!
Positive ad campaign, not dissing other faiths
Support for those who are unable to attend GA. Make GA more accessible. Less complicated scholarship process.
Learn to use other means of getting together and conversing.
Develop stronger connections between congregations
Overcome classism
Energy Breaks!
During Plenary!

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Taking yourself out of self—resonate with others

Impact of congregational community life that affects our personal life

Spiritual mature in both internal and interaction with others in need

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Synergy of a group of people with many differences finding a compatible identity and purpose

A crisis can precipitate a personal and communal response. UU openness helps

UUA and UUSC can create a system to respond to a crisis effectively (i.e. New Orleans)

What possibilities for the future?

UUA programs in India and Africa are meaningful

Green Sanctuary and other UU activities can change at all levels—like this Convention Center

We can be leaders at the group and individual levels through the internet and other means.

Small group ministries (circles) can change as individually if not the world and make us more significant efforts.

The covenanting approach and process works at all levels as well, lighting a chalice can start many other activities

If an African individual can win a Nobel Prize by eliminating land mines, all of us UUs working together can start other world change.

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Valuing people who are different (different ages, adults/children) (the other as a whole person)

Expanded sense of community

Service/gifts to neighbors, wider community, teens the poor, folks caught in conflicts (national, racial)

Celebration (finding hope, not letting negative experience set the tone)

Expanded sense of possibilities

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Preparation, thoughtfulness, process, guidance, leadership

Inclusion of diverse mix of stakeholders

- * Interfaith
- * Multigenerational
- * Interracial/multicultural

Willingness to step out of your comfort zone—confronting discomfort, resistance, and stepping beyond it

Invitation into reflection, discernment (asking for help as an act of leadership)

Creation of trust

What possibilities for the future?

An outward-focused UUism, in dialogue with our neighbors/communities

We're the place in town where our neighbors find peacemakers

We're known as people who do things for religious reasons—e.g. we celebrate Christmas by helping the poor with ½ the money we would have spent on presents for ourselves

Nurture our children to be equal partners in the faith community (congregation)

Exercise the power of liberal faith to heal the social hurts of oppression/empower progressive voices and presence in the wider community

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Things we all care about:

1. Valued spiritual life
2. Proud of UU identity (without apology)
3. Public knowledge of UU and tolerance
4. Growth
5. Kinship of UU network

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

1. Living your faith
2. Gathering with other UUs (District, GA, etc.)
3. Leadership
4. Social justice, Peace
5. Radical hospitality in UU churches

What possibilities for the future?

1. Growth with respect
2. We would be the social justice leader—national and otherwise
3. Ongoing evaluation of our UU religion
4. Retention of youth in their transition into young adulthood
5. Becoming a Respected religion
6. Interpersonal growth along with growth in numbers

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Having communities that welcome you in—that provide you with options of providing service—that give you opportunities to take risks that help you grow. Having a community that is a meaningful center, a spirit-centered group. A community that is multi-generational. A place that is an active and vibrant presence—where Generosity thrives.

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

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What possibilities for the future?

OUR WISHES Strong Multigenerational ministries

1. More people would see UU as a place where you can do service to help others
2. That UUs will have already “Woven the Fabric of Diversity”—that we wouldn’t need that curriculum. Wouldn’t need to go thru the process of becoming “Welcoming”—we would just truly welcome All.
3. That our congregations will transform us.
4. That congregations will make noticeable differences in people’s lives.
5. All UU congregations would have adequate resources
6. The UUs would work on creating Interfaith youth groups

What values connect your stories and wishes?

- * People cared about each other—through
 - Acceptance and trust
 - Affirmation of gifts
 - Employment of gifts
- * Hopeful vision of
 - Individuals
 - Healthy congregations
 - Partnerships
 - Society/world
- And the service to implement the vision
- * Working with others to make a bigger difference

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

People extending a personal touch

Attitude: We are a church of 2nd chances

Beliefs that were bedrock of action > moral imperative to carry through

“Yes” culture/affirming of possibilities

Approachable, friendly minister—setting was comfortable

Vision and skills for cooperation with others

What possibilities for the future?

- A. Desired: Marriage equality in all 50 states.
 - Bold: all 50 states
 - Affirmative: equality
 - Grounded: beginning with CA, MA. . .

- B. Desired: Healthier and happier congregations able to work with other groups to influence our country in policy and attitude (e.g. health care, environment)
 - Bold: influence country
 - Affirmative: Healthy/happy
 - Grounded: Appreciative inquiry, non-violent communication

- C. Desired: Helping others as they need (not as we imagine) whether or not they're UU's especially understanding labels are not real things
 - Bold: all people
 - Affirmative: meeting them on their terms
 - Grounded: Anti-oppression training

- D. Desired: Healthy congregations that welcome long-term visitors and seekers as they grow spiritually and find their religious home (even if it's not with us.)
 - Bold: all seekers
 - Affirmative: helping find a home
 - Grounded: BYOT, Development of spiritual practice groups

What values connect your stories and wishes?

- All are contributing towards common goal and see the value of how our individual contribution helps make a difference.
- Each person's contribution is valued as an important part of the whole. (one person paints, another makes calls, another marches)

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

- A congregation existed
- The congregation affirmed an idea as a goal.
- Acceptance of diversity and willingness to try new things
- Money
- Willingness to raise an idea
- Leadership and staff support
- Intercongregational events and programs

What possibilities for the future?

- More radical growth through both outreach and retention (through generations)
- UUs have much larger impact on the world than we do now
- Raising profile of liberal religious perspective
- No longer filed under "other" on religious surveys
- Greater variety in worship services—more emotional, musical, experiential

What values connect your stories and wishes?

- “Everyone who needs us knows who we are”: UU identity in the larger community
- Importance of children, youth and young adults
- Spirituality, ritual
- Social awareness
- Radical hospitality—Everyone feels welcome

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

- Freedom for leadership for youth
- Good RE curriculum
- Good youth program
- Technology (UUA website)

What possibilities for the future?

- Active engaging programming for children, youth and young adults. This includes a place in governance
- A well-funded campus ministry in every church near a higher education institution
- Who we are and what we believe is known and understood by everyone locally and nationally
- Everyone who finds us feels welcome and feels nurtured by our radical hospitality
- We have deep spirituality

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Mentoring and teaching children
UUA Principles
Community
Existing, vital UU churches
Reason in religion
Space to think about God/salvation/death
Volunteerism
Worth and respect of strangers

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Having a place/location
Having volunteers
Having money
Having resources
Having RE curricula (Spirit Play)
UUA website
Enough people

What possibilities for the future?

We envision

- > Church grows
- > UU children grow up and stay
- > Community suppers continue
- > No trouble recruiting RE teachers/more teachers volunteer than needed
- > Children grounded in the UU tradition
- > Church is a community center for community events

Obstacles to Wishes

50% of people do not want to grow
Too high expectations of building

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Community

Reaching out to help others

Food

Music

Support and caring in crisis

Shared affinity to

Connection at a human level—

Music food support of community

Connections—

Common among humanity

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Culture of support → care committee

Leadership school

Class (UU programs) culture of UU meeting—dissent with love

Cr??es Fundraiser

Grassroots leadership

What possibilities for the future?

→ Outreach—interfaith connection and communication

→ more development outside the church

→ UU leadership training

* Publicize and expand it greatly to more folk

11 - \$14,000/1 week 50 people

→ Community CE food prep for daily use.

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Early on in our respective UU churches and larger gatherings we felt a sense of acceptance, respect and being valued despite our differences.

We would all like to see UU grow in numbers but in diversity—we would feel more connected to the world, have a better chance to create peace, it's more interesting, gives us more viewpoints (intellectually stimulating). Also enjoy engaging with philosophically similar people—best of both worlds: depth and breadth.

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

- 1) Leadership that immediately set tone of acceptance and respect. Also, had a culture within our congregations that was accepting and welcoming and provided multiple avenues for connecting
- 2) Diplomacy—honest but tactful communication
- 3) Intentionally-planned, well-practiced routines for organizing events

What possibilities for the future?

We are more open than ever to examining and critically engaging with controversial and challenging issues

Our numbers and diversity have increased (doubling our #s every 5 years?!)

Our congregations have a greater depth of interpersonal relationships—engaging emotionally and spiritually, not just intellectually.

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Supportive and enabling

Taking a risk

Compassion

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

People

Culture

Organization

Belief that all people have worth

System-if positive

What possibilities for the future?

If we can be more supportive of each other, they will go out and be more supportive of others

Our efforts have helped narrow the gap between the “haves” and the “have-nots” leading toward a more equitable society

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Taking action on a desired end result

Value of mentoring

Ability to develop a common plan

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Culture that believes they can make a difference: empowerment

Audit of actions, ongoing assessment

Champion(s) to move idea forward with staying power

What possibilities for the future?

Make all people ministers of the earth

Provide tools to resolve conflict interpersonally and between cultures

What values connect your stories and wishes?

- * Connections, cooperation within the community
- * Uncovering strengths we all have
- * Willingness to share “how-tos”
- * Value of personal sharing
- * Learning
- * Personal growth
- * Organizational growth
- * Transformational growth
- * Openness to take risks, to deepen experiences

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

- * Responses to crises
- * People
- * Work of others in the past, building on that work
- * Valuing the lay voices and lay leadership

What possibilities for the future?

Our congregations nurture our spirits through opening our hearts and create connections that inspire bold and effective actions to help heal the world.

What values connect your stories and wishes?

What do you care deeply about?

Connectivity b/w congregations and communities

Relationships drive us on some level

Fairness and inclusiveness; openness

Respect for denominations historical background

Still in transition → "revelation is not sealed"

UUA is a work in progress

just like each member

Recognition that process is the reality

Revel in change

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

People

Attitudes

Sense of caring

Reverential attitude

Sense of respect and honoring one another's Being

Sense of preciousness

Church culture and association

What possibilities for the future?

We look totally different from each other (not homogenous but unique)

We are the cement between the mosaic

Body of shared values, but realized differently by congregations and members

Church services and Reprograms are diverse and are different formats but reflective of shared values (ex. Soulful Sundown services would include elders participating)

Intergenerational activities are common and pervasive

Congregations of different sizes work together

Shared ministry is active and alive

What values connect your stories and wishes?

- * Commitment—over time
- * Action—on behalf of others, not just ourselves
- * Vision>derived from principles
- * Connection/community
- * Health/wholeness/spiritual well-being = actual well-being for humans and creatures
- * Appreciating diversity/difference>finding common ground so that we can work together
- * Hope and faith that one can make a difference
- * Celebration/joy
- * LOVE applied

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

- Church (spiritual) infrastructure
 - Tradition
 - Programs
 - Principles
 - People
- Marketing (make ourselves known)

What possibilities for the future?

We are:

- * A worldwide presence; a factor in world affairs
- * There are “out” UUs elected at all levels of government
- * We are the model for true democracy and democratic process; for transformative, creative synthesis of divine ideas, that results in vibrant, wide-spread well-being and peace

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Valuing every person and their path
Valuing many paths (spiritual/religious)—pluralism
Freedom
Community
Passion to make a difference in the world
Activism

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

RE program for children/youth
Respect for youth in the church
Adult ed curriculum (BYOT)
UU camp/conf. (SUUSI)
UUA support (Welcoming Cong. Program)
Leaders—excellence in clergy
Congregational culture of openness welcoming
Lay leadership development
Supportive community

What possibilities for the future?

There are resources that support deep spiritual development
Our national leadership always “at the table” speaking from spiritual grounding to the issues of the day. (as a model for local congregations.)
Through curricular development (lifespan) we develop congregations that move beyond squabbling to a strong identity as pluralistic yet unified faith communities
Our congregations are truly lifespan faith communities—learning/worshipping
Continue to be active on issues of shared concern.

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Authentic relationships

Respect

Bridging (and celebrating) differences

Positives of valuing and integrating youth into the life of the congregation. Making resources available that appeal differently to individual youths

Translate ideas (anti-racism, etc.) into individual lives within the congregation

Democratic process (side-by-side with respect)

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Youth empowerment

Strong ministers

Deep listening

Many factors listed above

Suspending judgment

Openness to change

Feeling safe to disagree

Sense of community

What possibilities for the future?

- A. Cultural shifts that have occurred would honor and prioritize youth empowerment, anti-ageism issues (anti-racism, etc.)
- B. We as UUs act on our values.
- C. UUism and its values are widely known, becomes a household word. (this will result in those who share our values being more likely to join with us.)
- D. We have been spending more on youth empowerment
 - Anti-racism
 - Multi-culturalism
 - Anti-oppressionare issues that youth can raise consciousness on
- E. Open-space ideas, generated in recent past, are being acted on

What values connect your stories and wishes?

1. Serving justice
2. Growing in spiritual depth individually and in our congregations
3. Power of community, shared values
4. Taking action on the basis of our values, i.e. walking our talk
5. Integrity, as identified by living out our values
6. Being in relationship with marginalized communities
7. Diversity, welcoming the stranger

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

1. Supportive and innovative leadership
2. Annual issue and advocacy training provided (formerly) by UUA in D.C. and related activities at GA
3. Support of other congregations
4. People who showed up and participated

What possibilities for the future?

Differences are focused in a few areas, and grounded in our spiritual depth and experience

- Programming for youth that is provocative for youth and adults and transformative
- A just community, in all ways
- UUs consistently have a seat at the table in issues of social justice
- Explicit programming for life-span faith development

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Acceptance and embracing diversity

Welcoming and integrating visitor into our church family

Social justice

Reaching beyond immediate group—from congregations to community

Listening to each other

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Attitudes which promoted acceptance

Belief in 7 principles

Feeling safe

What possibilities for the future?

A future without fear, where we are interconnected, accepting differences—ties together love, social justice, family, welcome, and everything

7th Principle is fundamental

What values connect your stories and wishes?

- Acceptance, openness, support, caring for others
- Inclusiveness
- Welcoming diversity
- Spiritual nature of the interdependent web of life
- Creating world peace
- Churches being models and partners in the community in living the values here listed

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

- Culture of acceptance
- Open minded people
- Open to change and growth
- Committed leaders working for the common/greater good
- Willingness to explore
- Hope for the future of humankind
- Belief that people can come together to resolve differences

What possibilities for the future?

- A generous spirit of financial support from our membership
- A youth community that is open and accepting to all and a vital part of the decision making process of the UUA and individual districts
- National culture of religious pluralism

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Supportive community—comfort

Authenticity—real relationship

Beloved Community “Communitas” Authentic

Church as village

Opportunities for spiritual growth and learning

Inherent Worth and Dignity

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Trust—as in living out our principles

“RE”!!

Liberalism

Philosophy of inclusion

Professional ministry

Ministry to one another

What possibilities for the future?

Liberal religious churches available for all who seek them!!

No town or college would be without a spiritual authentic beloved community

“communitas”!



Every being will be accepted, celebrated, comforted, educated with no explanation necessary!

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Value of youth on multiple levels

Inclusiveness of ? people & different

Presence of our congregations

Leadership—how we develop our leader

Both lay and Minister

Openness

Community and Connectedness

Responsibility to each other and to the larger community and Accountability

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

- Leadership
 - > Ministers
 - > UUA
 - > Polrus (?)
- Youth curriculum and Programming
- History—and being in Community
- Attitudes of Openness/Acceptance

What possibilities for the future?

UUism = A place where people of ? ages can experience a thoughtful spirituality in all stages of life.

Doing important work (that comes out of our UU values) (changing the world) and being known for that

We are courageous and practice responsibility and accountability in our congregations

We are also responsible and accountable to the larger community

What values connect your stories and wishes?

- Caring about the broken
- Active inclusiveness
- Depth and intentionality in relationships
community
justice work
- Personal commitment to witness is central to our faith

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

- Our words, especially the Principles and Purpose
- Intergenerational Leadership and support
- Transformational Worship
- We build upon Justice

What possibilities for the future?

Our work for justice and our connection to what is holy and sacred for each of us are inextricably intertwined and interdependent.

What values connect your stories and wishes?

- * Extension of our UUism to our greater family

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

- * Emotional connection to UU community

What possibilities for the future?

Our immediate but larger family value (and even participate in) our UU experience.

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Acceptance

Openness

Caring

Honesty (truthfulness)

Supporting spiritual paths

Valuing people (our community)

Deep (offering? thinking?) relationships

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Resources (fiscal funding Example: the OWL curriculum funding for staff positions)

Fertile ground f readiness and good (bold) leadership

Willingness to sacrifice and commitment

An initiation and advertising

What possibilities for the future?

A world where Unitarian Universalism is a household name. Let the church leave the building!

Where our values are fully integrated in all our lives

Where it matter that you love not who you love

Where people explore a rich variety of spiritual growth with support

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Inclusivity

Growth—desire to grow our faith

Connectivity—feeling of being part of a larger movement

Social responsibility—heal the world—community involvement

Green/environmental awareness/Green Sanctuary

Extended family—sense of community

Valuing leadership development

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

- Open minded attitude of people
- Our heritage, history, the people who came before—our impact
- UUA—training and resources provided by the larger movement
- Personal connections
- Financial resources of congregation that enable us to have these experiences

What possibilities for the future ?

- More UUs in the world:
 - Growth of congregations
 - More awareness of UUism
- Congregations will be:
 - More connected
 - More affirming
 - More welcoming
- Stronger stands for justice
- More youth programs
- More people experiencing GA or other large meetings/events with other UUs

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Importance of community

Importance of pursuing healthy and equitable relationships (right relationship)

The variety of ways to find spiritual fulfillment

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Openness to the unexpected

What possibilities for the future?

We are growing in richly supported multiple paths where spiritual fulfillment thrives. All ages and stages are nurtured spiritually. Activism is contagious. Outreach is easy and natural. Barriers to the full development of every person are eliminated.

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Giving and receiving
Respect for others—opinions, beings
Dedication—to an issue, commitment
Prophetic witness
Care and concern, empathy, compassion
Freedom
Empowerment
Personal responsibility
Grace
Connectedness
Spiritual engagement and transformation
Community
Creativity

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Courage human connection trust
Leadership
People
Worship
Openness (opportunity and attitude)
Ministry
Beliefs
Seeking spiritual depth
Sharing experiences and ideas
Skills and training

What possibilities for the future?

- ½ million adult and children members
- UUs are a respected voice for social justice change
- UUs have multiple forums for spiritual engagement—small groups, public, witness, nontraditional worship
- UUs and the world at large understand who we are, what we stand for and the UUism can and is transforming lives
- We practice freedom of thought, belief and conscience
- We respect individual and the world

What values connect your stories and wishes?

(Not listed in order of importance)

- Remember our Unitarian Universalism heritage (don't forget where we came from)
- Let our history teach and inspire us in what we do today and tomorrow—to love!
- Celebrate diversity: racial, ethnic, the ways we love, class, age, physical condition, theism, non-theism, and theology
- Focus on what unites us and not what separates us
- Inherent worth and dignity of all humans—not just talking the talk, but walking the walk. Taking risks, being willing to take unpopular stands

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

- Attitudes
- Willingness to learn new ways of being in relationship
- Intentional environment
- Welcoming the new and different
- A space for transcendence (in worship)

What possibilities for the future?

1. UUism is more diverse (in all the ways previous listed in Q #1)
2. We are in covenantal (right) relations with each other
3. We market our message of love more actively and effectively
4. We are first responders to human tragedy and suffering
5. Our youth are unleashed, energetic and strongly identified as UUs to continue to transform the denomination and the world
6. We are scrupulous in educating our professional leadership regarding conquering oppression

Grounding

1. Youth keep us on track and we respond. They are a strong and respected voice at the table.
2. Willing to step out of comfort zone to trust each other with sometimes uncomfortable feelings (we are in covenant)

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Affirmation

Empowerment

Acceptance

Feeds into purpose of churches—not just about individual selves, but transform the world, too and do so in community

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Availability/accessibility to UUism

Lifespan education—continual growth, celebration of change

What possibilities for the future?

Desired—evangelism—

Bold—provocative—leading edge of mainstream religion

We are a powerful force in American culture for justice, equity and peace

Grounded—Sad that we have historical examples

****Everyone is aware that UUism is, and has been, on the leading edge of mainstream religion and a powerful force in American culture for justice, equity and peace. Don't change!**

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Community (emotional/spiritual)

Welcoming

Embracing

Acceptance

Authentic

Compassion

Freedom to grow

of expression/belief

Clarity

Influence

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

- Leadership of minister, other members
- Culture of that congregation
- Skills of staff
- Psychological factors

What possibilities for the future?

UUs are heard on social issues.

UU actions serve as a model for other denominations

UUA is known and understood as positive force in the world

What values connect your stories and wishes?

A “spacious” faith tradition

Respect for self and others and for personal/spiritual growth

Genuine caring about others/spirit and sense of community

Enthusiastically welcoming one another

Open to various “services/resources” for spiritual life (i.e. the arts)

Accepting people where they are/Radical hospitality

Spiritual life is valued, but not defined

A need for UUism to articulate its teachings

That we’ve reached a broad, generous, deep understanding of spirituality for UUs

Relational aspects of leadership (Leadership School)

Connection and meaning-making opportunities and encouragement even in meeting

Personal values in sync with larger movement

Advocacy around LGBT issues (Question 2)

Honoring worth and dignity of every person (regardless of abilities)

A wondrous love; spiritual deepening

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Leadership

People

Contagious attitudes of welcome, acceptance

Policies (behavioral covenant)

An openness to the spirit, making space for the holy

System: leadership development opportunities

Willingness (Attitude) of people to avail themselves of these opportunities

Can-do spirit of the community

What possibilities for the future?

Beloved Community is the norm

UUism more visible, known for values and issues

UUs proudly embrace this tradition as a liberal faith tradition with teachings

UUs will be the standard-bearers for values and practices that lead to a just and sustainable world.

A spiritual community that is deep, thoughtful, compassionate, generous and attractive to large numbers of people.

What values connect your stories and wishes?

We all share the need to find new ways of relating to and honoring each other.

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Our experiences developing our connections of community within our congregations

What possibilities for the future?

Creative ways of educating, nurturing and supporting individuals, families and communities through the medium of our Unitarian Universalist faith

The possibility that our Social Action provides exposure to UU principles that can be witnessed by a wider population and in turn inspire a sustainable growth movement

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Non-creedal, non-judgmental openness

Love and service to all

Inclusiveness

Raising awareness about oppression and taking action

Enabling people to grow and change as individuals and yet remain a part of the community even if beliefs change

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Commitment to education

Leadership and leadership support for

Welcoming Congregation program

Community

Fostering a culture of thinking for yourself

Adherence to principles and uniting on those principles

Serendipity (but a church should not have to rely on that to get new members)

What possibilities for the future?

Global expansion and congregational growth

Having a name that reflects what we are today and not just our history

Inclusive terminology (i.e. fellowship instead of church)

Affecting people during major life changing periods or events (such as Coming of Age ceremonies, dealing with bereavement, connecting social justice activism and daily life)

Broad diversity of membership that reflects society as a whole (more cultural and class diversity, etc.)

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Community
Generosity of spirit
Realization of dreams
Social justice
Commitment
Inspiration
Love and Doctrine of Love
Acceptance

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Lay leadership education
Financial resources
Learning experience/growth experiences
Ensuring love is considered
Education and Training and skill-building
Shared vision and mission
Caring
Leadership
Policy development
Awareness, use and possible change of congregation culture
Model the values we want to experience
Hospitality and welcoming techniques
Being a companion during difficult time
Direct experience

What possibilities for the future?

A beloved community to which people want to belong—connections and relationships
A facilitation of learning in order to achieve mission and values
(not enough time to finish)

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Empathy, compassion, justice

Positive change is possible in individuals and the community

Inherent worth and dignity and interconnected web, regardless of class, sexual orientation, age, etc.

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Organized spiritual and/or religious community

Programs and affinity groups (Women's Alliance, Social Justice, YRUU, etc)

Shared beliefs/values

What possibilities for the future?

We are an association that represents 25% of the US population

We live in a country where all peoples can marry

Immigrants are respected, have equal rights and have humane living conditions

Immigrants are considered a valuable resource in interactions and exchanges that inform our views of each other.

As a culture, we are more unified

We are growing in our personal, spiritual and communal lives

UUs are respected leaders in bringing about dialogue and positive change

We work to realize non-verbal communication such as music as a unifier.

What values connect your stories and wishes?

- A relationship that is important to individuals we/is nurtured in this faith
- Tolerance of others' beliefs, attitudes, approaches to thinking about the world is an important value
- Liberalism
- A faith that demands no creedal adherence very important

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

- Investigating the church of her son brought her to GA (she is brand new since yesterday)
- Because of wife who brought him to church
- Read the ad "are you a Unitarian and Don't know it?"
- Personally asked—strongly invited to attend an annual Church retreat

What possibilities for the future?

Bring our faith out to the world where it's needed; nursing home, community centers not white steeple

Student ministry—lay leadership critical

We need to spend more time on our elevator speeches. In our church everyone will have one

Better websites or no one young will join

Not on Sunday only is where our church meets

Our church sees its mission as among, within, and beyond its own walls

Who we are and what we believe is known and understood widely

What values connect your stories and wishes?

We value supportive community

Each person feels steadfast love and unconditional commitment

Being present to each other

We value growth and change

1st principle We value the inherent worth and dignity of all individuals

7th principle We value the interdependent web of all existence

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

People in the communities

Lay empowerment

Ministerial empowerment

Belief that all are able to minister to each other

Your congregation or denomination is a safety net

Our basic needs must be met to be able to stretch (good infrastructure in the church)

Good policy in place

What possibilities for the future?

Everyone in congregation is taking the time and energy to be engaged with others in the congregation

All are welcomed and EXPECTED no matter the age, ability, race, background, or class

We all share in the bringing of the holy (ministers, religious educators, musical professionals, admin professionals, people)

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Lifting up and engaging community

Transformation

Right relationship

Reaching out and reaching in

Compassion

Empathy

Willingness to risk

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Leadership

Organizing-communication

Policies and practices that are codified

Being able to be heard and to take action on what we heard

People are inspired to work together

There is an audience beyond the four walls of the congregation

People know how to use resources

Humility

Willingness to risk

What possibilities for the future?

We envision a faith movement that:

- * Can move toward outcomes that have the highest value
- * Where an authentic alignment of our faith call, public statements and experience
- * We ask for help when we need it, offer help when it's needed
- * We are able to effectively collaborate internally
- * We broke out of our boundaries and fears to achieve our visions
- * We learned courage
- * We deepened our commitment and increased our passion
- * Members have the opportunity to truly hear each other and can find solutions for issues within the congregation
- * Members live our faith unapologetically in a humble and open way
- * Members feel they can share something that is real

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Engagement in improvement of community
Respectful openness to difference
Ability to disagree without being disagreeable
Peacefulness
Constancy
Flexibility
Applied/educated religious perspective
Enthusiasm
Leading by example
Speaking truth to power

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Shared values
Leadership
Diversity focused on common values
Transfer of values from our mentors
Investment of our mentors in us
Institutionalized AR/AO/MC process

What possibilities for the future?

Multifaith social action work in communities grounded in covenantal living ability we don't compromise others' core beliefs
UUs perceive selves part of mainstream faith community are accepted by community
Truth and reconciliation process embedded in community life
 Frees up our creativity
 Freedom in use of our financial resources
 Ethical financial practices
Openness to educational programs for all ages including other religions

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Transforming power of love

“I – thou” relationship

Valuing the other

Respect

Dialogue not debate

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Invitation

Common desire

Grounded in our faith

Access to appropriate terminology to express our faith language

Community

What possibilities for the future?

UUism is a leader in dialogue amongst nations in achieving world peace and justice

Grounded: UUism is currently a leader in dialogue amongst USA presidential candidates in addressing peace and justice issues Compassion Forum

What values connect your stories and wishes?

The principles

Justice work

Working in our local communities

Standing up for and take positions

We need to make a difference—This idea was common to us all

Moving away from unsatisfactory religious experiences, our UU congregation was there for us.

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Local (congregational) leadership

Accepting attitudes/at the local congregation

What possibilities for the future?

We are (now) nervous about principles changing

We have (in 2013) excellent online resources (or whatever the technology is at that time)

e.g. where speakers or anti-war protests are in my community, resources for worship, resources in our congregation, i.e. knowledge or expertise on many topics, e.g. energy conservation, socially resp. investing, peacemaking, A.I and governance, city planning, AIDS awareness, and many many more topics

More help for the local congregation use social networking web sites, e.g. YouTube, etc—it's what young people use

What values connect your stories and wishes?

- a. Loving, caring supportive community
- b. Belonging and contributing to something larger than the church community
- c. Connection and relationships within the church—both parties being vulnerable
- d. Beliefs and values drive actions
- e. Dealing with disagreements in an open and respectful (NV communication is great model!)

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

- a. Inclusiveness and caring of groups (covenant groups, youth groups, RE classes)
- b. Leadership of groups and committees
- c. Willingness to acknowledge that change is necessary and deal with it in the larger world and our church community
- d. Diversity
- e. Willing, able wonderful volunteer!

What possibilities for the future?

- 1. UUs continue to act as allies of oppressed groups who are working for justice.
- 2. Involve children/youth in social justice work along with adults (trips to New Orleans, Habitat for Humanity)
- 3. Becoming a “peace church”—being peaceful within our churches and working for peace in the world!!
- 4. Communicating in non-violent, respectful ways and teaching that to all children!

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Acceptive/welcoming

Live what we profess/walk the walk

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Culture of accepting different spiritual beliefs

Values that matched our own

Principles that include welcoming all

People that acted on their principles

Sense of community/true friendship

What possibilities for the future?

Growth in overall numbers (including more congregations)

Increased awareness of Unitarian Universalism and our principles (among non-members)

Same-sex marriage accepted throughout the country

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Depth of the sacred

- In space
- In experiences
- In language
- In community/communication (dialog)
- In individual lives

Valuing the “message” we have to share

- In evangelism
- In outreach beyond our “safe spaces”
- The gift and the responsibility

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Willingness to learn

to notice

**concern for the sacred—“thirsting”

Naming the desire

Curiosity and community willing to engage it

**a holy moment

What possibilities for the future?

Mature aesthetic (in space, language, etc)

YES!

Growth? YES. . .to a bit of concern in translation.

Important to “name” the fears around authenticity

Concern about media influence

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Valuing youth

Valuing common identity—congregational

Power of common identity—congregational

Democracy vs. indiv rights

Transparent process

Inclusive

Inter-generational→diverse w/o tokenism

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Leadership

- * Ability

- * Caring deeply

- * How they use their power

Culture

- * People in the congregation

Honesty

What possibilities for the future?

Cultural shift in the structure of UU throughout the UUA and UU congregations that values and empowers youth, innovation, people of color—ministering to everyone

Expand the worship experience to include more heart-connection and community

What values connect your stories and wishes?

- * Inclusivity—all welcome
- * Acting on our principles sustains our spiritual growth and spiritual growth is expressed through action

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

- * Openness to new ideas through experiences, open to exploration versus being closed mindedness
- * Each took responsibility beyond the Sunday morning service
- * Re: GA—need to make it more financially accessible

What possibilities for the future?

Each UU bring in one person/year—each year.

Shear increased quantity in membership opens up opportunities. This membership needs to have standards—in leadership of ministry and lay. There wil be more demand for competence in our leaders.

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Community

Working for the greater community with each other

Common values

Value individuals/choices

Action to back up values

Personal growth into UUism

We are part of a bigger thing

The potential contribution our youth can share with the world and UUA

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Having congregations that value youth participation

Caring about inherent dignity

Individuals have right and responsibility to work toward goals

Similar values among people—grounded on values

Our physical building

What possibilities for the future?

Reaching beyond us and reaching into us

Starting with this country and moving beyond to the world

Youth plays a major role in congregations and activities and conferences

UUs can have real effect on policy and values developed in this world

All people have a right to marry

All religions can get along with the help of UUism

What values connect your stories and wishes?

All experienced profoundly @ GA—connectedness, @ home with others seeking person-based faith, share and gain courage from others.

Youth empowered via GA v less supported @ home congregation

Also empower ideas to actions with home family, congregation, and larger community.

Score of connectedness—you/we are not alone. We support each other.

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

It was an affirmation being here @ GA with so many varied seekers sharing experiences, hopes.

The ad in the newspaper with sermon topic brought some to UU.

What possibilities for the future?

Youth empowerment within the denomination to stay and better transition programs for college and young, working adults

More bold marketing for name and value recognition with family values and living, loving diversity as in All Souls in Washington, DC.

Continuing music programs and in-service hymns, chants, traditional and progressive songs

Less cerebral, more emotional-based (heart-based) Sunday morning worship

What values connect your stories and wishes?

1. Community
2. Outreach (marketing—good signage is a must!)
3. Advocacy
4. Social justice
5. Compassion
6. Radical hospitality—in our congregations—and in our private lives
7. Generous stewardship to support the congregation and the denomination

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

1. Trained, motivated leadership. Social justice leadership through example
2. Community—an open and engaged culture
3. Commitment to our 1st principle
4. Belief in the important of our own faith

What possibilities for the future?

UUism nurtures open, supportive communities with active, effective social justice ministries that are nurtured by strong leaders and engaged congregations

What values connect your stories and wishes?

Respect for differences

Social justice issues

Walking rather than just talking

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

Sense of common humanity

Planning and cooperative effort

What possibilities for the future?

Everyone knows what Unitarian Universalism is/encompasses—even us.

Our congregations feel open and accepting to all who want to join us.

What values connect your stories and wishes?

- Full engagement—starting with the individual, moving on to the community
 - People have value
 - Individual journeys, and the expectation of growth—leading to community growth (growth of several kinds)
 - We are an individual within a community
- Both/and qualities—interaction between both equals growth
We are both an agent, and being held
Passion, honesty, authenticity

What factors made your peak experiences possible?

- Recognizing and holding the shadow (talking about it)
- Trust
- Opportunities for engagement (one-on-one, small group, services)
- Inspiration—through modeling, projects, ways of communicating
- Leadership—initiates, makes space,
- Group process leading to agreement-ownership (buy in)
- Risk-taking

What possibilities for the future?

UUs are bigger, numerically and individually and spiritually

We are a whole and integrated movement that engages with other movements

We are unabashedly religious, radically accepting and clearly spiritual.