



INNOVATION IS OUR TRADITION

# VISITOR'S GUIDE

HERITAGE & VISION • 24 FARNSWORTH ST • BOSTON MA

**Welcome to Heritage and Vision at 24.**

**This is just the beginning!**



## **OUR MISSION**

To represent Unitarian Universalism in ways that:

- Look inward *and* outward
- Are rooted in a rich history while looking forward to the future
- Have a presence and a reach that is at once local, regional, national, and global
- Encompass the headquarters and the wider movement in dynamic relation with congregations and UUs everywhere

# HERITAGE AND VISION



25 Beacon Street has been an important part of our movement's roots and history.

And, as the *Christian Register* observed in the 1920s, of the move into 25, "a new day in a new house will signalize the larger life of Liberalism."

*Heritage and Vision at 24* Farnsworth Street allows us to expand on our storied past, and connect it in a living stream to our dynamic present and our exciting future. It aims to engage visitors (JUs and newcomers alike) in the spiritual and ethical successes and struggles that we all face in living our values. Most importantly, *Heritage and Vision at 24* will invite you to contribute content, tell **your** stories, and share **your** vision for our movement's future. More fully than 25 Beacon ever could, *Heritage and*

*Vision at 24* will thus reflect you, our faith tradition's global reach, and where we are headed.

## NEW WAYS OF TELLING OUR STORIES

The new headquarters building, along with recent advances in technology, enables us to tell more of our stories, in much more dynamic ways, than was possible at 25 Beacon Street.

*Heritage and Vision at 24* is not confined to a single space; there is no "heritage and vision center" as such. Instead *Heritage and Vision* are illustrated and interwoven at several key spots throughout the first and second floors and, eventually, in virtual space.

*Heritage and Vision at 24* cannot show or tell it all. It *can* light pathways for visitors to learn more about what parts of it interest them, to add their perspectives, and join an ongoing global conversation about who we have been, who we are, and who we aspire to be.

Think of what you see as stops on a long, wide-ranging journey. Throughout, you will find resources for going deeper and learning more. Over time, other stops will be highlighted, and there will be new and different things to see, but always supported by an infrastructure where our stories abide: in archives, libraries, congregations, and other buildings. In print, in still and moving images, in video and sound. On social media sites and elsewhere on the web. And the stories you contribute will become part of that infrastructure, through *Heritage and Vision at 24's* content management system.

# FIRST STAGES

**W**elcome to the inaugural set of Heritage and Vision displays. Here you will find a combination of the virtual and the physical, the visual and the material, the finished and the still-in-progress, enduring displays and rotating displays—the content of which will periodically change.

In the following pages, we first describe what you will see now. Next we show how the displays might eventually look with your input and financial support. (See the back page for ways you can help shape *Heritage and Vision at 24.*)

The initial set of displays consists of several different elements.

**Enduring Displays** feature important historical elements brought with us from our former headquarters. **Rotating Displays** allow us to utilize key installation points to display a variety of symbols and artifacts from our various works in the world.

Once inside the UUA offices, the first two displays that you will see are prototypes of electronic installations, **The Brave Souls Wall** and **The Adventures in Faith Kiosk**.



# HERITAGE



## THE BRAVE SOULS WALL

The purpose of this installation is to highlight some of the ways that our faith has inspired us to take action in the areas of theology, community, and social justice. It blends words and images to point toward the larger scope of the ways UUs have struggled and continue striving to apply our values in the world.

The prototype includes ten clusters, each on a different theme.

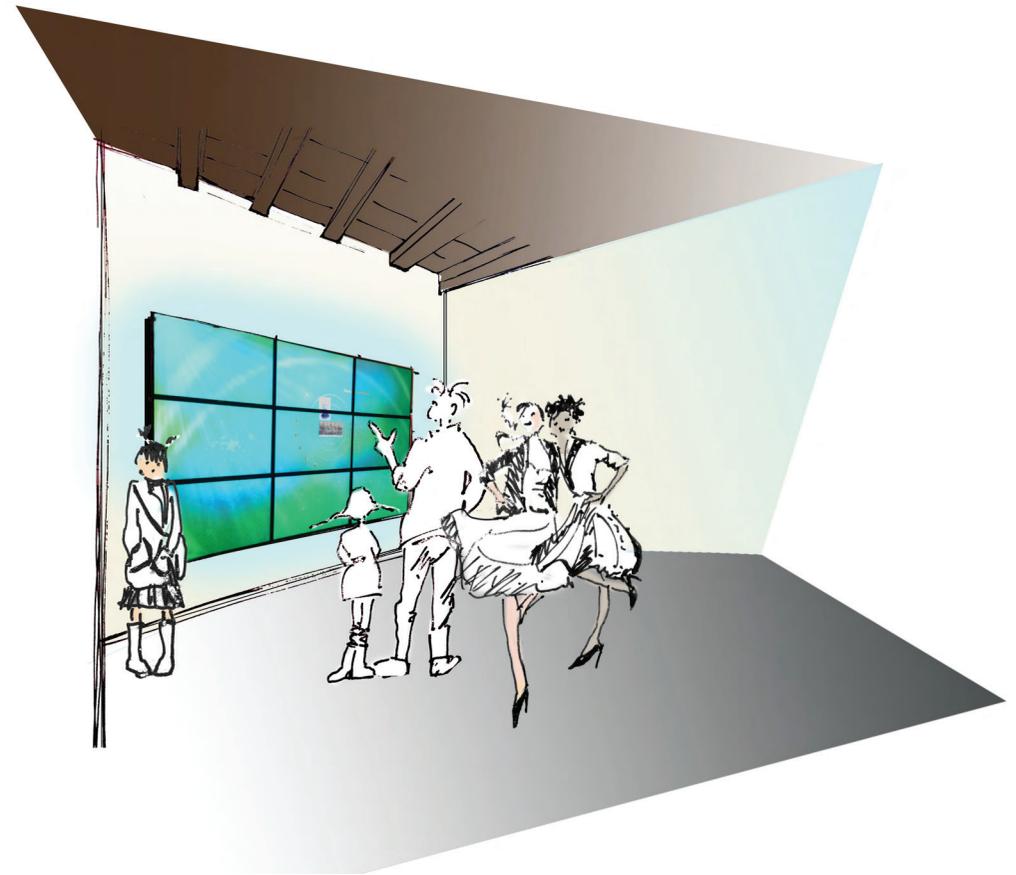
**“Brave Bodies”** lifts up UUs’ enduring commitment to sexuality education.

In **“Love Connects Us”** we see ways that congregations connect with and serve their local communities.

**“Love Made Visible”** shows UUs responding to trauma and disaster with resources, love, and support.

Our evolving journey to recognize and celebrate the LGBTQ members of our faith family forms the theme of **“It’s About Love.”**

**“Youth Leading the Way”** highlights one of Unitarian Universalism’s great strengths in affirming the importance of our youth.



The Civil Rights cluster draws on different ways UUs have been and continue to be found **Standing on the Side of Love.**

The worldwide reach of our faith tradition links two clusters: **“Global Pioneers”** and **“Partners in Peace.”**

**“Choosing Heresy”** draws on UUs’ tradition of theological innovation.

**“Who Says I Can’t”** celebrates women who refused to be stifled by gender norms and instead simply did what their values called them to do.

## ENDURING DISPLAYS

### Second Floor

The second floor features a number of important memorial displays brought with us from our Beacon Hill buildings. Here you will find the Selma Memorial, a large bronze plaque in tribute to three civil rights martyrs who were killed during the turbulent spring of 1965 in Selma, Alabama, as well as the portraits of William Ellery Channing and Hosea Ballou, important and influential early UU leaders.



To the right of the Artifact Wall you will find bound volumes of the *Christian Register*, dating back to 1821. What became the American Unitarian Association originated as a religious publishing house, and continued publishing the *Register* until 1957.

Inside the chapel stands the historic pulpit used by Channing from 1803 to 1809, and from which the Massachusetts Legislature debated the Bill of Rights, and ratified the US Constitution.

## VISION



### THE ADVENTURES IN FAITH KIOSK

On the wall to the left of the entrance is the Adventures in Faith kiosk. This offers another way for visitors to put the “you” in UU, and help shape our collective vision and future.

A core value of Unitarian Universalism is that each person’s journey is important to the whole. The faith adventure does not lie just in what the denomination does. “Adventures in Faith” invites visitors to tell us and one another about themselves and the aspirations and challenges they face in bringing their values into the world.



This installation features two screens and a terminal. The left screen loops images of and quotes from UUs. Using the terminal, a visitor is invited to tell us his name and where he is from. She can take a photograph of herself right there and upload it, along with her reflections on two questions on the theme of Adventures in Faith.

The visitor's photo, name, hometown, and responses will appear on the right screen, and then after a short while, they will become part of the faces and quotes looping on the left screen. You can then watch your words mingle with others to form a picture of the larger whole of which we are part.

## ROTATING DISPLAYS

### First & Second Floors

These areas allow us to highlight the intersection between Heritage and Vision, featuring examples of our ongoing efforts to make a difference in the world.

The outside walls of the Multi-Purpose Room offer a space to exhibit visual art. Currently on view are twenty-five stunning photographs which the Rev. Erik Martínez Resly made of our former headquarters at 25 Beacon Street.

Directly opposite the Multi-Purpose Room is the wood-and-glass Benjamin Franklin Cabinet, an iconic furniture piece brought over from 25 Beacon Street. The collection currently on view features items that relate to the scope of our international relationships.

## ARTIFACT WALL

On the second floor landing to the left of the Chapel is the Artifact Wall — a built-in cabinet for material objects.

The first display features items recovered from the Time Capsule that was placed in the cornerstone of 25 Beacon Street in 1927. That recovered collection included items that had been placed in a Time Capsule of the old 25 Beacon Street in the 1880s.

## REVOLVING PORTRAITS

Two parallel video screens on the second floor each display revolving digital images of some of the luminaries of our movement—many taken from portraits that adorned the walls of our former buildings on Beacon Hill.



## NEXT STAGES

**W**hat you see of the Brave Souls Wall and Adventures in Faith is only a start at depicting who we are and where we are headed. With your input and support, these interactive electronic exhibits will continue to grow and evolve.

Below we describe a few ideas for growing these displays. They are provisional, meant to illustrate the creativity and sharing that the technology makes possible, and to spark your imaginations. Your ongoing feedback, ideas, and imagination will inform the next iterations of this dream.

### BRAVE SOULS WALL PHASE 2

#### The Living Stream

Imagine this: As you pass through the UUA Commons, a glowing series of projected words pools at your feet, almost as if they are bubbling up from an underground spring. Each word evokes the ethos and values of Unitarian Universalism: *justice, reverence, heritage, spiritual, journey, faith, fellowship, limitless, etc.* As this living stream of words continues to gather on the floor, you soon realize that you have attracted a particular word that follows you around. And as you touch another word, the two words momentarily pair up to start a phrase. This may be indicated by a change in color, a flash, or a glow emanating from the wordpair. Once the words are paired up—"Brave Soul," "Sacred Space," "Our Story," "My Journey"—they are sent to the large interactive wall with a gestural motion such as a gentle nudge or a light tap.



As the Living Stream trickles onto the wall, it takes over the whole surface, and the couplet grows to become the main text on the wall. As more and more visitors interact with the Living Stream and send their couplets to the wall, the wall will constantly change, becoming a living, breathing reflection of the shared spirit of Unitarian Universalism.

Technology makes this possible, but only your interaction and support will truly bring it alive.

## ADVENTURES IN FAITH, PHASE 2

Similarly, technology and visitor support will enable us to grow the Adventures in Faith installation.

An essential part of this vision involves creating a content management system that would allow you not only to tag your photos, hometowns, or sources of inspiration but also allow you to search for names, faces, towns, and inspirations of other visitors. Moreover, this feature could then be accessed not only onsite at 24 Farnsworth, but via the web from wherever you are. You can then search other entries and see who else has visited *Heritage and Vision at 24*, and shared their adventures in faith.

As with the Brave Souls Wall, the future potential of Adventures in Faith uses technology to grow and strengthen our collective, evolving UU story of faith.



## LIGHT A FLAME

Our presence in the Innovation District allows us to signal our identity in new and compelling ways. We wish to engage passers-by, visitors, and friends by beckoning them into our new space. To do so, we hope to project an interactive chalice symbol via a monitor placed in a street-facing window.



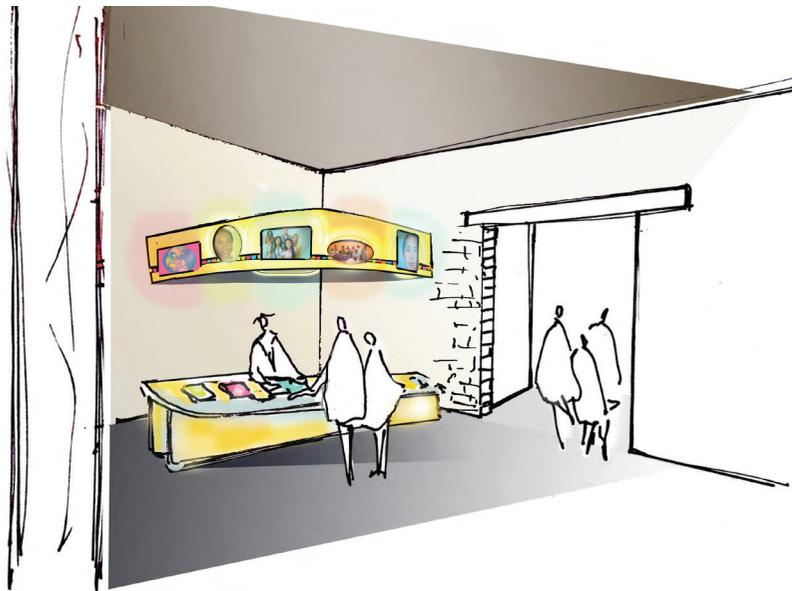
As passers-by approach, the flame can react to their presence, growing and changing colors. The flame calls upon the tradition of the wayside pulpit, which communicates the values most meaningful to us.

As the flame grows and changes colors through interactivity with passers-by, it also sends out words and phrases that hint at the principles of Unitarian Universalism and even current events. These phrases/sentences can be updated frequently by staff.

## WELCOME ARC

As visitors enter the UUA offices, they are greeted by a Welcome Desk on their right, staffed by UUA employees. Mounted above the desk, on the wall behind, is a series of monitors displaying various media feeds. The monitors are enconced within a glowing enclosure and are intrinsically part of the experience, as they are not a series of squares upon the wall, but rather organic portholes that offer tantalizing glimpses into the UUA.

The content on the monitors can be updated by the UUA to welcome a visiting youth group or perhaps a foreign dignitary. A personalized message can be added here. Other snippets of content come from the Adventures in Faith recording stations, as faces of the UUA—and people's messages of faith—float from across the display, softly glowing, and featuring a preview of the other exhibit areas.



## REVERENCE FOUND HERE

In order for visitors to explore UU stories in more detail, this space on the second floor offers an intimate, welcoming, and comfortable seating arrangement. Located outside the Chapel, a series of armchairs and interactive coffee tables allows visitors to delve deeper, either on their own or as part of a group.

These nooks offer an opportunity for reflection and introspection. Embedded within the arms of some chairs are touchscreens or tablets, while the coffee tables feature larger interactive surfaces. A beautiful, touch-sensitive representation of the chalice might appear, with the flame glowing in different colors. One table might have playful interactives that are geared towards children, while another a timeline of UU history.

This area also features a rich repository of UU oral histories that visitors can access via the tablets embedded in the arms of the chairs.

Headphones can be provided or visitors can use their own.



## HERITAGE & VISION @24

Become a part of *Heritage and Vision at 24*.

**SHARE** your impressions and join the conversation at:

<https://www.facebook.com/TheUUA>

**SUBMIT** creative suggestions and constructive feedback to:

[heritage@uua.org](mailto:heritage@uua.org)

**VISIT** our web page to learn more about *Heritage and Vision* and find additional resources:

<http://uua.org/hv24>

### **CONTRIBUTE**

Your generosity (individuals and congregations) will help ensure that *Heritage and Vision* reflects our faith tradition truly, linking our storied past, our dynamic present, and our exciting future together in a living stream. Please contact our Stewardship and Development office to learn more about how you can support this project at

1-888-792-5885

or

[giftinfo@uua.org](mailto:giftinfo@uua.org)