

Prototype 1: A U/U Center for Immersive and Interconnected Youth Spiritual Discovery

Defining Question:

- How might we create a nation-wide network of youth and young adults centered around supporting their spiritual growth and leadership?

Essential Elements:

- Offering deep faith formation for youth and young adults through age-appropriate spiritual development curricula including identity formation, shared life experiences, and clear opt-in pathways to leadership experiences and growth in our movement.
- Accompanied and staffed by dedicated youth & young adult volunteers and religious professionals who are trained as coaches.
- Operating at local levels in participating congregations as well as at national and regional levels, simultaneously connected online and on social media.
- Including U/U heritage and social justice trips and experiences facilitated by national staff.

Some Considerations:

- Elements of the network should be co-created with the participation of youth and young adults.
- We might include elements of the UU College of Social Justice which is being sunset.

Prototype 2: The UUA Cultivates the Future of Faith: Growing Religious Innovators and their Communities

Defining Question:

- How might we, with the UUA's leadership, support and resource innovators so they are able to spend more time developing and testing out new ideas?

Essential Elements:

- Providing institutional support for innovator retreats to dream together, regular salons where they can connect, collaborate and share knowledge.
- Systematically reviewing what has worked and share evolving knowledge.
- An ongoing campaign of stories, articles and videos to stimulate folks' ideas.
- Offering accessible training modules for innovators as part of Leader Lab
- Creating acceptance of an innovative ministry track for new UU ministers in credentialing and building the expectation that professional innovation is part of what church is.
- Offering trained innovators paid opportunities to test their ideas in congregations or utilize their administrative and other support to develop new adjacent communities.
- Establishing a UUA Board position for someone in non-traditional ministry as liaison to the innovation network.
- Redirect UUA funds to this work earned sources (e.g., new online hymnal, GA fees) and the endowment because it's needed now.
- Constructing a database of progressive funders interested in innovation and contract with a consultant to organize a fundraising campaign to support the initiative.

Some Considerations:

- This will require input from innovators both before it begins and while it is happening - what is working, what needs to change?
- There are roles for the UUA, congregations, and individual UUs

Prototype 3: Becoming Community Connection & Spiritual Growth Centers

Defining Question:

- How might we find ways for our brick-and-mortar congregations to become third places for communities where people can gather outside of Sunday mornings to get to know each other and support mutual spiritual growth?

Essential Elements:

- Becoming a “third place” in the community that houses vital community activities, and where anyone who identifies with UU values and values inclusiveness can find belonging and be supported in their spiritual growth.
- Being seen as a center for human development and meaning-making instead of as a church, bolstered by activities open to all that guide people in discerning their identity and spiritual formation.
- Hosting community activities that might include community forums, speaker series, family activities, parent/caregiver support center, social justice organizing, participating vigils. Maybe it is a place for cooking or hosting a meal, or gathering for games.
- Hosting ongoing community services like a community garden, free libraries, art galleries, farmers markets or other food sharing models.
- Developing a volunteering model that grows participants into program volunteers and leaders.
- Making community activities open for everyone with membership available for those who want to deepen their spiritual understanding and vitality.
- Offering practical guidance for congregations that decide to sell their current building in favor of a third place.

Some Considerations

- Being intentional in governance about making the shift from defining who we serve as current members to all community members.
- Learning from congregations that have done this—e.g., the HUUB in Orange, NJ
- Anticipating and listening to the concerns of current members, and assuring that they will still have a home.

Prototype 4: Create a Comprehensive Virtual Spiritual Community Serving Diverse “Communities within the Community”

Defining Question:

- How might we create a comprehensive online spiritual community, operating both nationally and locally, that reaches people searching for connection and meaning who share our values but are not interested in the traditional church model?

Essential Elements:

- Providing online access to spiritual growth support, learning events, social justice participation, and small group ministries-- online nationally and physically through participating congregations.
- Offering central elements (e.g., worship experiences) and a menu of spiritual growth resources and experiences and encouraging groups with different spiritual and life needs to form communities that are relevant to them.
- Provide virtual connections to members of specific communities with meet-ups, virtually and physically in local communities.
- Developing and sharing a technology infrastructure—nationally and locally.
- Offering pathways to local brick-and-mortar congregations for virtual participants who seek more embodied experiences

Some Considerations:

- Could we build and expand on the Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) model?
- How do we most effectively reach the spiritual but not religious online?