

**Consulting Support:**  
**Situation Analysis, Vision Creation, Feasibility Study, Capital Campaign**

FROM: Mark Ewert, UU Stewardship Consultant and Coach

FOR: Unitarian Universalists of Southern Delaware (Lewes)

RE: Request for Proposal Response

DATE: June 2022

This document will provide information about consulting support about 5 phases of work to support UUSD to go from its current situation, to a completed capital campaign and project:

- I. A Next Steps process: a situation analysis and holistic assessment process of stewardship in the congregation
- II. *Searching for the Future*: an intensive and rapid “bottom-up” visioning process, which will provide the material for a rapid strategic plan
- III. Initial development, using the new vision and plan, toward a capital campaign
- IV. A Financial Feasibility Study: a series of personal interviews with a diverse group of congregant households to assess engagement and potential successful fundraising goals for the capital campaign
- V. Capital Campaign support: including the support needed for UUSD volunteers and staff to complete a successful drive, including plans for the full commitment fulfillment period

These processes are used by the *Stewardship For Us* team; they were originally developed, and have been implemented successfully for decades, first by the congregational stewardship program of the Unitarian Universalist Association and now by its successor, the *Stewardship For Us* team. They are also included in Wayne Clark’s book, *Beyond Fundraising*. More recently, with support from a UU diversity, equity, and inclusion consultant, we have reviewed these processes for multicultural inclusion. This work is ongoing, as we learn more about ourselves and as our UU congregation clients change.

Each phase will be explained along with information about the consulting engagement, its fees, about the *Stewardship For Us* team, and about the consultant Mark Ewert. We normally create agreements for each part, yet an agreement can be made for multiple phases (for instance the Financial Feasibility Study and Capital Campaign). As we have not worked together before, it is recommended that we start with a single agreement for the Next Steps process.

**I. The Next Steps Process**

Our work always begins with a Next Steps process, which provides valuable information for the organization, regardless of the projects it foresees in the future. An organization like the Unitarian Universalists of Southern Delaware is a community, a network of systems. Since, “everything affects stewardship and stewardship affects everything” the Next Steps Weekend provides the opportunity to examine and measure that community and those systems across a wide spectrum, not just stewardship, to ascertain the overall health and capacities of the organization.

During Next Steps, a variety of written documents, budgets, plans, reports, giving and organizational histories, and governance documents are reviewed by the consultant. Interviews are also conducted with key leaders and stakeholders. These can be done by phone or video (depending on the status of the Pandemic) or onsite with the addition of travel costs, when it is safe to do so. As with many things, doing a Next Steps in person provides more value to the congregation. Existing physical plants are toured to gain an understanding of potentials and challenges, and digital infrastructure is assessed. The outcomes are a written report and a verbal summary and discussion with the leadership, detailing the suggested steps to broaden and deepen financial stewardship. This will include with suggested timelines and further resources. A special lens can be applied to the Next Steps process, depending on the longer-range goals of the organization – like a visioning process, capital campaign, planned giving program launch, etc. In those cases, particular readiness indicators will be assessed, and specific recommendations and timelines will be included toward that successful effort or campaign.

All information about the organizations where we work, and their constituent's data, are held in strict confidence. We literally cannot do our work without it. This is spelled out in greater detail in our agreement document. A copy of that is available upon request.

#### Next Steps Process Set Fee:

Unlike our other services, which use a set rate per hour of work, the Next Steps process is a set, project-based fee of \$2,500. Actual travel costs, if incurred by the consultant are reimbursed by the congregations as well (these cannot to exceed \$1,000 in additional travel costs). As this is an expected process before we do any other work, and provides such high value to our clients, we discount the cost of the Next Steps process.

## **II. Searching For The Future and Rapid Strategic Planning**

A Searching for the Future (SFTF) process engages a large number of UUSD congregants to “crowdsource” a new vision for the congregation (and other elements towards a strategic plan). This is a vision for the congregation and not just the building, since a congregational vision will determine the spaces and uses needed of the building and grounds. Then using the results of the SFTF, consulting is be provided to support the development of a rapid strategic plan that includes goals, strategies, and markers to track progress.

In our program and for this process, we usually use the following definitions:

- *Mission*: “A concise, powerful, and moving description of the ministry of the congregation; its reason for being, and its place in the world.”
- *Vision* is, “a vivid image of the congregation in an ideal future state, when it is at its best. A description of what changes in the world will have resulted from its work.”

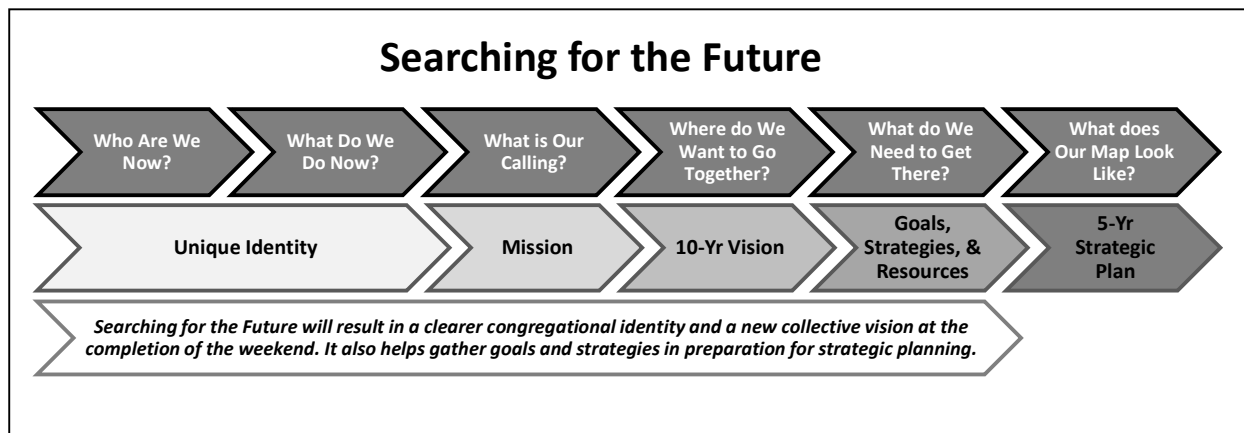
Note: the current UUSD vision statement is: “Creating a spiritual community embracing universal acceptance, justice, and compassion.” This reads more like a mission statement and begs the questions: 1) Can this statement help you create plans to reach these values or understand what your building needs might be in the future? and 2) Why can you not do this right now? Unless a vision statement can lead to a plan, and a plan to understand the resources needed to reach it, then the vision is not actually useful to the congregation.

### The Process Design

*Searching for the Future* (SFTF) is a program of small group workshops designed to help a congregation clarify its vision, and develop an initial set of goals and strategies that can jump-start a strategic plan. The process is tailored to the specific needs and starting point of each organization, and often focuses on the physical, financial, and human resources needed to support its mission and vision. It is especially helpful for framing requirements for a growth initiative, major facility improvements, or program expansion. SFTF is designed expressly to feed into rapid strategic planning, as longer processes have less applicability in our swiftly changing environments.

This is a grassroots-up instead of a top-down model. The magic of the process is that it is “crowdsourced” – it gathers information from as many of the congregants as possible in a series of concurrent, identical workshops. This helps to hear from new congregants, those that are less involved in the congregation, and those from marginalized groups. The workshops themselves are lively and fast moving, facilitated by trained volunteers from the congregation. This makes the process of clarifying a new vision not only painless, but actually fun. The energy and enthusiasm create a palpable “buzz” and builds momentum for future steps, including buy-in for a capital campaign.

Here is an illustration of the progression of the elements of planning:



Part of the process uses a “train the trainer” model in which the consultant facilitates a session for the volunteers who then pair up to co-facilitate the identical sessions of mixed lay leaders, staff, and congregants. This provides diverse benefits such as leadership development, constituent ownership of the process and results, leveraging of consultant resources, and enabling large numbers of constituents to participate and give input in a small group setting. The co-facilitators are then used, at a follow-on meeting, to help clarify and distill the information gathered. The clergy or executive team are also usually included in that follow-on meeting.

### Standard Stewardship For Us Consulting Fees

All of our services (following the *Next Steps* process) are provided at a uniform cost of \$130. per hour worked, plus any actual costs for agreed-upon travel by the consultant. This cost would apply to the Searching for the Future support. Note: any agreed upon travel includes time in transit from the consultant’s office to your organization, for one way only (no hourly cost for time

returning). Each agreement we sign with an organization stipulates a not-to-be-exceeded amount of work time for that particular piece of consulting. That helps create clarity about the services being provided, and allows you to control organizational expenses.

#### Scope and Cost for *Searching For The Future*

The usual amount of consulting time needed for a Searching for the Future (SFTF) process is 32-40 hours, which would cost \$4,160-\$5,200. In addition to preparation, recruitment, and publicity, SFTF usually includes on site elements: live facilitator training for the workshop leaders, coordination of the workshop day, and the synthesis session with the facilitators on Sunday, so travel costs for the consultant would be involved. Further discussion with leaders would be needed to make a final estimate of costs for the agreement document.

#### The Rapid Strategic Planning Process

Orientation and support for the rapid strategic planning process, using data from the SFTF weekend, is normally done via webinar, video conferencing, conference calls, email, and shared web-based documents. This is usually managed through a set number of prearranged meetings with the committee, which usually includes clergy or executive team members. For this reason, there are not usually any travel costs and most strategic planning processes only require 16 – 24 hours of consulting support, costing \$2,080 - \$3,120.

#### Past SFTF Clients

I have worked with the following congregations on *Searching for the Future* projects (starting with the most recent):

- Eno River UU Fellowship (Durham, NC)
- Community UU Congregation at White Plains (NY)
- Camp Unistar Foundation (MN – UU summer camp)
- UU Congregation of Greater Naples (FL)
- First Religious Society of Carlisle (MA)
- UU Church of Akron (OH)

Feel free to contact the following lay leaders regarding my work with them:

Eno River: Barbara Sheline, [bsheline@gmail.com](mailto:bsheline@gmail.com)

White Plains: Creighton Cray, [Creighton.cray@gmail.com](mailto:Creighton.cray@gmail.com)

Camp Unistar Foundation: Fred Hulting, [fhulting@comcast.net](mailto:fhulting@comcast.net)

Note: Some congregations choose to create a vision statement and strategic plans through other means. That is best decided after the Next Steps process.

### **III. Financial Feasibility Study (FFS)**

Support for a capital campaign usually includes four phases: 1) development of the initial detailed timelines, strategies, and a case for support, the volunteer plan, and the publication/communication needs; 2) preparation for and implementation of the *Financial Feasibility Study* (FFS). The FFS not only informs the capital campaign, it is an important preparation for the donors; 3) Then the capital campaign consulting would include committee

formation and orientation, planning, communications and events strategies, training of “askers”, and support during the campaign implementation; and 4) the final phase of consulting would be data tracking and analysis, clean up/wrap up process, and advice on continued communications through the “collection” period.

There are normally two discrete agreements for a capital campaign:

1. The Financial Feasibility Study (includes the initial phase of campaign strategy, timeline, and message development)
2. Capital Campaign training, launch, implementation, and wrap-up

### Initial Planning

Preparation and the initial planning documents for a capital campaign is vital to its success. The purpose of this is to lay out a set of steps, the initial *case for support*, governance and congregational polity processes, communications and an engagement plan so that everyone in the congregation engages in and contributes generously to the campaign.

### Financial Feasibility Study

A Financial Feasibility Study (FFS) is a vitally important part of any successful capital or special campaign for any congregation. An FFS is based on extensive in-person interviews and analysis to help assess preparedness and surface other useful information for a campaign, before it is launched. FFSs need to be conducted by a neutral outsider who is a skilled interviewer, so that the responses are candid and complete, and the resulting data is valid and useful.

Financial Feasibility Studies deliver a wealth of information:

- Determine potential response within discrete demographic or activity groups
- Assess familiarity with plan and rationale
- Test key messages and identify effective language
- Surface challenges, opportunities, or barriers that may arise during the campaign
- Identify potential volunteers and willingness to participate
- Discover major-gift prospects and people to be included in the Leadership Phase of the campaign
- Solicit potential contribution amounts so an appropriate campaign goal can be determined and targeted “requests” can be determined
- Identify people who have made planned/legacy gifts or would be interested in doing so

### Benefits

- Prepares constituents, many of whom may have never participated in a capital campaign or given a major gift
- Creates an appropriate context for financial commitment levels
- Helps refine the communications messages and strategies
- Identifies areas where further education and engagement are needed, or where building plans might be refined to inspire increased giving
- Surfaces other possible sources of support, from outside the normal constituent group
- Inspires confidence in the congregation for the campaign

- Provides valuable data and intelligence for the leadership
- Participants feel honored to be included and have their information contribute to the study

### What we Offer

Our support includes the orientation of the lay leaders who help coordinate the process for the congregation. We work with them to analyze the prospect list and identify participants for the study group, so that the information is provided by a representative demographic. We coordinate with lay leaders to craft questions specifically for your campaign and congregation. We provide recommendations and samples for the invitation to participate in the study, and to inform the broader congregation about the process. We conduct the interviews with discretion and maintain strict confidentiality except where people give express permission to share specific information. We compile and analyze the data, providing both a written and verbal report to congregational leadership (usually through webinar). Finally, we consult with leadership to help inform governance and campaign processes using the results.

Because the process of a Financial Feasibility Study is intensive, and valuable to a campaign itself, the timing of an FFS is important. It is normally done once a generally accepted project plan is ratified by the congregants, after a process of plan development and education.

### Scope for a UUSD Financial Feasibility Study

The most accurate picture resulting from a financial feasibility study (FFS) comes from interviewing the most people possible to get a good cross section of supporters. It is recommended that approximately 20% of your pledging congregants or 23 households be interviewed as couples or single people. These will include households who represent the diversity of your congregation and might include long-time, modest amount donors, more dedicated volunteers, as well as your top givers.

### Standard Stewardship For Us Consulting Fees

All of our services following the Next Steps Weekend process are provided at a uniform cost of \$130. per hour worked, plus any actual costs for agreed-upon travel by the consultant. This cost would apply to the Financial Feasibility study, Capital Campaign support, and any other consulting. Note: any agreed upon travel includes time in transit from the consultant's office to your congregation, for one way only (no cost for time returning). Each agreement we sign with a congregation stipulates a not-to-be-exceeded amount of work time for that particular piece of consulting. That helps create clarity about the services being provided, and allows you to control congregational expenses.

Approximate 43 consulting hours would be needed to complete this FFS work, segmented into five parts:

1. Support to the volunteer committee in initial campaign planning and message development
2. FFS planning, which includes: selecting study participants, creating initial case materials to use in the study, inviting participation, creating the study questions
3. Doing the in-person interviews, 3 days, on site



4. Compile and analyze data, including segmentations (age, involvement, leadership, past giving, etc.) and author report
5. Deliver the written report and present key points to the UUCD board, staff, and top-line stewardship volunteers via webinar. This would include some discussion time to plan immediate next steps

With this estimated number of consulting hours, the approximate cost of the Financial Feasibility Study will be \$6,000 (plus actual travel expenses).

#### **IV. Capital Campaign Support**

A capital campaign is often a once-a-generation opportunity for a congregation to come together and invest in the future. It invites constituents to dream big about what is possible for Unitarian Universalism in their community and in the world. They also put the congregation at risk of conflict, failure, or long-term disappointment. Our program is specifically designed to avoid many pitfalls and support the growth of stewardship culture, so the congregation (and specifically the annual drive) is stronger after the process.

Capital campaigns are usually conducted in support of a major building program, although some portion of campaign proceeds may be used as seed money for new programs or other initiatives. A capital campaign requires a collective leap of faith on behalf of the congregational leaders — in one another and in a future in which Unitarian Universalism and their congregation can thrive and grow in mission and impact. Many congregations choose to conduct capital campaigns combined with their annual drives. This approach is not only efficient but also encourages messaging that links annual operations with long-term capital programs, ensuring that one supports the other.

*Stewardship For Us* consultant support includes creating a compelling case for the building project, engaging the entire congregation and all constituencies, helping identify potential lead donors, generating and sustaining momentum and excitement, determining optimal timing and whether to combine with the annual budget drive, and planning and carrying out the campaign effectively and efficiently.

#### **Benefits**

- Realistic and effective plans that balance sustaining momentum with opportunities for congregational deliberation, involvement, decision-making, and ownership
- Campaign leadership development that fosters broad yet efficient participation, leveraging diverse talents and skills
- Sharing stories of how members of other congregations found substantial sums to commit to capital campaigns, and encouraging creative thinking to enable everyone to contribute
- Integration of a capital campaign within a larger context of long-term mission and resource planning
- Assistance with governance process and relationship to capital campaigns, addressing policy governance in all its various forms

- Follow-up support to encourage new pledges and rigorous tracking of receipts to maximize pledge fulfillment

### What we Offer

We bring you comprehensive services that guide you through the entire capital or combined campaign process from the earliest planning stages through completion of the campaign. Early work includes developing a comprehensive plan, timeline, and communication strategy that specifies all activities, tailored to the calendar, culture, and governance structure of the congregation. The plan identifies all resource needs, including staff time, volunteers, and outside services. Our planning work is coordinated with executive, professional, and lay leadership to ensure feasibility and broad buy-in.

Once a campaign is launched, we provide tailored support as needed. Typical services include assisting with communication plans and renewing campaign case statements and other materials; advising on recognition programs; support for data management; on-site training for the volunteer Visiting Stewards, in both the Leadership and General Phases, who will meet with constituents to discuss and accept their financial commitments; assistance in planning for major events. Our support is provided via a combination of site visits and off-site support using video and audio conference calls, email, and document exchange. We work with you to ensure that you get the services you need while managing travel and consulting costs.

As the campaign comes to an end, we help you explore outside options for funding. These might include foundation or other grantor organizations, which normally require constituent fundraising to be completed before a proposal is sent to them. We also help you make and carry out final decisions such as tailoring the building project to the funds raised, exploring financing or close-the-gap options, and setting up systems for receiving and tracking capital funds. We provide initial and follow-on support to ensure that you have solid systems and procedures in place to encourage additional pledging over the term of the campaign, from new members and from those whose financial situations improve, and to track receipts to maximize pledge fulfillment. And we help you celebrate your success!

### Fees

After the Financial Feasibility Study, the usual amount of time needed for capital campaign consulting support is 40-48 hours, or \$5,200-6,240.

Using past experience, you can expect the consulting costs for the Financial Feasibility Study and Capital Campaign to be less than 3% of the total amount you hope to raise in this campaign. This under 3% of goal has been an average cost in our program for many years. Understanding that there will be other, lesser campaign costs (printing and mailing, events, etc.) general industry best practices are that capital campaign costs should be less than 15% of the campaign goal, and where less than 10% is considered very efficient.

### References



Please feel free to contact the following individuals from UU congregations/organizations, where Mark was the stewardship consultant for consulting work similar to that presented in this proposal:

| Name   | Phone        | Email                       |
|--|--------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the Peninsula, Newport News (VA)</i> |              |                             |
| Rev. Andrew Millard  | 757-369-1098 | minister@uufp.org           |
| Rebecca Wheeler  | 757-651-3659 | rebeccawheeler001@gmail.com |
| <i>Community Church UU, Chapel Hill (NC)</i>                                 |              |                             |
| Rev. Thom Belote   | 919-942-2050 | revthomb@gmail.com          |
| Paige Smith  | 919-618-1748 | paige.smith50@gmail.com     |
| <i>All Souls Unitarian Church, Indianapolis (IN)</i>                         |              |                             |
| Rev. Anastassia Zinke  | 410-266-8044 | azinke@uuannapolus.org      |
| Christy Campoll  | 317-439-1475 | ccampoll@gmail.com          |

#### **V. About the Stewardship For Us (S4Us) Team:**

The *Stewardship For Us* team grows directly out of the Unitarian Universalist Association's congregational stewardship program and its decades of success working with UU organizations. We are a group of independent consultants, yet we have a preferred vendor memorandum of agreement with the Unitarian Universalist Association. We remain in close touch with local Regional staff and resources wherever we work. Our goal is to be part of a contiguous network of UU support.

We provide expert advice and assistance in building strong, sustainable stewardship programs that are grounded in the mission, vision, and community of your organization. We offer expertise in the areas of budget drives, special stewardship campaigns, assessment of financial capacity for capital projects, capital campaigns, mission & visioning, strategic planning, legacy gifts and endowments, leadership coaching, and stewardship workshops for organizational leaders. Custom designed programs for specific challenges and opportunities are also offered.

Our approach is based on a number of core concepts:

1. **Partnership.** You bring to this relationship an intimate knowledge of your organization, collectively and as individuals. We bring years of experience and lessons learned in hundreds of organizations, ranging from a couple of dozen members to almost one thousand members. Blending what we all bring to the relationship and apply to your challenges is what yields success.
2. **Appreciative Approach.** Looking for problems and seeking to correct them is sometimes necessary. However this tends to maintain the status quo and limits the ambitions of both people and organizations. An appreciative approach opens up people's creativity, provokes their engagement, and inspires their contributions. It envisions what might be and plots a course to get there. We help bring fresh energy into systems where people are repeating cycles that are limiting or losing energy.

3. **Practical Solutions.** In most cases, organizations call on S4Us because they have a problem or have hit a plateau and wish to advance. In some cases, an opportunity has arisen that the organization wishes to make the most of, without waste or delay. Our responsibility is to work with you to craft best practices solutions that fit your situation. As consultants, we also provide “the forcing function,” asking challenging questions, reminding us of the goals and standards we set, and keeping an eye on our agreed upon timelines. Solutions are seldom simple and cannot be applied the same everywhere; beware the consultant who arrives with a ready-made solution. Let’s invest the time and effort to get it right.
4. **Capacity Building.** It’s great to solve the immediate challenge, but what about next year? Part of our solution set is to ensure you build capacity and have the tools and information to institutionalize the lessons we learned together. We go beyond technical solutions to ensure that best practices are adopted and become part of the organization’s “institutional DNA.”

Note: Most of our work is done via phone, conference call, video call, video conference, webinars, email, and shared web-based documents. Any on-site work is specifically approved and scheduled in advance by the organization.

#### **VI. About Mark Ewert**

Mark Ewert is a stewardship consultant for Unitarian Universalist organizations; his focus is on helping congregations, retreat centers, and UU associated nonprofits to grow their cultures of generosity. He has worked with over 80 UU organizations, of all different sizes and in all kinds of settings, during the last 13 years. While he was President of the Board of Trustees at All Souls, the organization held a capital campaign that raised \$8.5 million. He regularly presents webinars, workshops at General Assembly and at Regional Assemblies, and consults with UUA staff members on stewardship learning opportunities.

He is also an International Coaching Federation, Professional Certified Coach (PCC), Chartered Advisor in Philanthropy (CAP®) and has a practice as a philanthropy and organizational leadership coach. He is a current member of the board of the Faith & Money Network. Mark’s book, *The Generosity Path: Finding the Richness in Giving*, published by Skinner House Books, is available through the UUA Bookstore.

#### **VII. About Equity and Inclusion in these Processes**

I am committed to combatting racism and other biases in myself and with UU congregations through my consulting work. Some notable instances of use of this lens:

- For the past 6 years, I have been part of intentionally racial diverse group of consultants called *Undoing Racism*. We build our relationships, study, and take action together to combat our own racism and bring anti-racism to our work.
- I am the author of a three-session add-on series to the “Beloved Conversations” curriculum: *Seeing Our Economic Lives*. This helps the participants explore the intersection of race and money in their own lives, in America, and in their congregation.
- For the past 3 years, the *Stewardship For Us* (S4Us) team has engaged an anti-racism consultant to help us orient toward liberation in how we work together as a team. They have

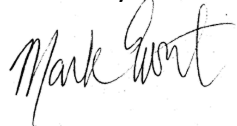
also helped us to review and refine our S4Us programs, systems, and communications toward being more equitable and inclusive. The work is an ongoing project.

- With our work we have been emphasizing the *Widening the Circle of Concern* report with our clients since it was released.
- We recently voted as a group to officially adopt the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle.

## **VII. Closing**

I appreciate the opportunity to submit this proposal as a consultant resource for the Unitarian Universalists of Southern Delaware. I look forward to hearing from you, and can provide additional information, references if needed, answers to your questions, or responses for your concerns.

Faithfully submitted,



Mark Ewert

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