

## **All Souls Church, Unitarian Washington, DC**

**Goal 1 Implementation Team:** Erika Landberg and Catharine Clarenbach, co-chairs; Gabrielle Farrell and Thomas Colohan, staff; Carolyn Fowler-Smith, Mary Rojas and Kurt Fernstrom, members; Victor Branham, Board of Trustees liaison to the Team.

### **Goal 1 Monitoring Report For: The Board of Trustees, March 23, 2011 meeting**

#### **Part I: Overview**

##### **What has drawn us to this work?**

In order to effect the change we hope to see in the world—the change that brings about the Beloved Community of which we dream—we center ourselves in our own wisdom, the wisdom of our fellows, and the wisdom of our shared and diverse traditions. Furthermore, through spiritual exploration, we deepen our understanding of ourselves, our aspirations, and the gifts that emerge from our own hearts. We spend time in contemplation, study, discussion, time inhabited together and alone.

As the Vision 2020 Committee did its work in 2009-2010, one of the three areas that emerged as most important to the congregation of All Souls was spiritual development across the lifespan. Engagement with religious traditions, practice, contemplation, and service came through loud and clear as something that makes our congregation precious to us.

The members of the Goal I Implementation Team do this work because we believe that spiritual development is a key part of making the world a better place and we wish to do so within the context of a religious tradition and history that is All Souls Church. We cherish the processes of the Spirit of Life in our hearts, no matter our age, life stage, class, spiritual orientation, church membership status, or personal history. For the Team, working together with the committees implementing spiritual development activities in the church is itself a shared ministry and a spiritual practice of love for the church and care for all our well-being.

##### **Goal 1 Team's Initial Work Plan**

- Create Terms of Reference for our Team and share with the other Implementation Teams.
- Develop a worksheet to use when interviewing committee leaders, so as to standardize responses that can be more easily measured.
- Meet with committee leaders about their committees' needs, hopes, and work in spiritual development at All Souls.
- Collect and begin to analyze quantitative and qualitative data about the committees, their activities and members specifically as they related to visioning.
- Begin discussions regarding the precise wording of our Measurable Results, including and especially the use of the word "intentional" as regards spiritual development.

## PART II: Data Collected and Lessons Learned

The meetings with All Souls Church implementing committees have been illuminating and the Goal I Team thanks all Committee Leaders for taking the time to talk with Team members. The meetings with committees demonstrate the high level of activity in the church. Specifically the interview worksheet used explored:

- The committee's connection(s) to Goal I
- Connections to specific measurable results – with a specific focus on numbers
- Committee activities – both present and future
- New resources the committee will need
- Partnerships and/or collaborative efforts with other committees and activities in the church.

As demonstrated on the quantitative chart on the next page, the total numbers for Goal 1 activities are higher than expected. Indeed, participants in the church's visioning process who set the initial measurable results expected difficulty in reaching the approved benchmark numbers. Two of the three initial measurable results—participation, and opportunities— have been exceeded. Leadership, which is a more challenging measurable for the Team to assess across implementing committees, does not meet the initial aggressive measurable at this point in time, the beginning of 2011.

Several spiritual development opportunities/areas are responsible for higher than expected numbers, including: 1) robust enrollments in Children's Religious Education (though this was considered when setting the benchmark); 2) the Adult Spiritual Development and Covenant Group expansions; and 3) increased participation in the adult choirs and the new children's chapel choir.

In the case of leadership, this measurable result may have been set too high. However, several of our committee interviews indicated ongoing efforts to recruit additional leaders in their areas of ministry, and other recommendations for this measurable – such as leadership training and volunteer appreciation efforts – are not fully in place right now and when implemented may well expand the numbers of leaders.

Congregants participating in developing the vision during the 2009-2010 Visioning Process emphasized that achievement of the long term measurable results would depend on using the implementation year to build a foundation to measure future growth and success. It appears, at least initially, that even though they are not all at full implementation, we are presently in the process of building the following foundations in the church.

- **Measurable Result 1**— congregants participating: *develop plans to integrate intentional spiritual growth into all areas of church work;*
- **Measurable Result 2**— opportunities provided: *develop lay leaders who can lead spiritual development activities; identify spiritual development activities that ensure breadth and diversity of opportunities;*
- **Measurable Result 3**— congregants leading: *include spiritual development leaders, i.e. ushers, greeters, covenant group leaders, trustees and officers, and RE teachers, in leadership training; include recruitment and replacement in the training; continuously acknowledge and appreciate leaders.*

**Quantitative Results:** The chart below summarizes the measurable results data collected thus far:

<b>Committee</b>	<b>MR 1: Participation</b>  <b>2011 Goal: 35% of congregants are regularly involved in intentional spiritual development</b>	<b>MR2: Opportunities</b>  <b>2011 Goal: 55 separate opportunities for intentional spiritual development are offered to congregants</b>	<b>MR3: Leaders</b>  <b>2011 Goal: 250 congregants are accountable in leadership</b>
<b>Adult Spiritual Development</b>	<b>Total 160:</b> Estimated 160 to 225 participants based on current registrations	<b>Total 31:</b> 28 classes; 1 Mentoring; 1 ASD teaching and ASD Committee work	<b>Total 31:</b> Congregants leading classes or serving on the Committee
<b>Children's Religious Education</b>	<b>Total 366:</b> 300 children registered(not including infants); 66 parent helpers	<b>Total 6:</b> 1 Sunday AM classes; COA plus Chapel Choir; Posada plus Youth Conference; teaching	<b>Total 77:</b> 44 teachers; 3 chapel leaders; 10 Committee members; 15 mentors; 5 youth participating on the YG steering committee
<b>Book Nook</b>	In future: estimate # of customers in a year	<b>Total 1</b>	<b>Total 5:</b> 1 committee leader and 4 volunteers
<b>Covenant Groups</b>	<b>Total 192:</b> 192 covenant group members	<b>Total 23:</b> covenant groups	<b>Total 39:</b> covenant group leaders
<b>Music</b>	<b>Total 120:</b> 40-45 in All Souls Choir;50-60 in Jubilee Singers; 15 in chapel choir	<b>Total 4:</b> 3 choirs plus Committee work	<b>Total 15:</b> 1 committee chair; 10 committee members; 4 new choir officers
<b>Stewardship</b>	Giving is a spiritual practice but unsure how to count so as to be meaningful	<b>Total 3:</b> 1 Committee work; 1 reflection writing and presenting and 1 generosity event	<b>Total 17:</b> 2 co-chairs, 15 committee members
<b>Ushers</b>	<b>Total 70:</b> 70 Sunday morning ushers	<b>Total 1</b>	<b>Total 6:</b> 1 usher coordinator; 5 head ushers
<b>Worship Associates</b>	<b>Total 10:</b> worship associates	<b>Total 1</b>	<b>Total 10:</b> worship associate coordinator plus associates
<b>Preliminary Totals</b>	<b>Total 918</b> (duplicates not accounted for)	<b>Total 66</b> No double counting	<b>Total 200</b> (duplicates not accounted for)

The Goal I Team was surprised by the high numbers, particularly in participation and opportunities, but has not yet been able to reflect on them in depth and so *we do not recommend a change in the benchmark numbers now*. By the end of 2011 we should have the information needed to determine whether the leadership measurable result is a realistic number. Additionally, the Team did not measure or inquire about training and appreciation efforts and most likely will do so going forward.

### Highlights from the meetings with committee leaders:

- The spiritual development fostered by church committee work has two dimensions: personal spiritual development and the spiritual development of the church at large. The comments from both the Music and Worship Associates Committees were particularly profound on this point.
- The meetings enabled lay leaders to do some new thinking about their committee activities that could lead to deepening and/or expanding their work.

### Opportunities that surfaced in the meetings:

- New innovative ways to “grow” the committees, find more volunteers.
- Collaborations with other church committees now and in the future.

### Obstacles and Challenges

- For the Goal I Team:
  - We are figuring out just what data we should be collecting from committees and how to accurately tabulate that data. Many congregants are involved in multiple activities and therefore are counted several times in the present numbers reported. It is possible for the church’s database to count this but it will require substantial work to figure out how to do so. Who leads that effort?
  - We have not determined what constitutes “success” in terms of participation or opportunities in comparison with other congregations. Also, Measurable Result #1 is directed to participation by a desired percentage of congregants, but we do not have a base number of congregants with which to work. We believe this number needs to be determined, and used by all Goal Teams.
  - The measurements of participation or opportunities are strictly related to their quantities. No attempt has been made to determine the quality of any given opportunity (such as an ASD class) nor do we believe any such determination is possible.
  - When asked, several committees indicated the need for additional resources. We need to determine what entity addresses these implementing committee resource and support needs.
- For church committees – the following challenges were identified by more than one committee leader:
  - Better ways to recruit participants/volunteers
  - Better use of technology – use of data bases
  - Leadership training
  - Dealing with church building limitations

### Part III: Next Steps

The Goal 1 Team has identified three areas of activity in the coming months, and others may unfold as the Team gets more deeply into its work:

- 1. Specific follow-up steps to this initial report:** This first progress report comes early in 2011, and the Team wants to consider more deeply and broadly its identification process, i.e. dig more deeply into

the whole issue of spiritual development and what it means for us personally and for the church as a whole; maintain regular contacts with committee leaders; and explore 2 and 3 below. **The team also expects to get feedback from its discussion with the Board at its March 23 meeting that can inform the Board's own decision making as well as future Goal 1 Team work.**

2. **Collaboration with other goal teams:** Because many of the committee activities and ministries of the church overlap among the three goals, good collaboration among them is essential. **We think the Church Council can provide the place for this to happen.** In practical terms – because Goal I is the first one to give a progress report to the Board of Trustees – we have shared our early efforts with the other Teams. But much more can be done to pull together all efforts to achieve our Vision and Goals, and our Team is willing to help make collaborative work with other teams as rich and fruitful as possible. This would include sharing information and supporting each other.
3. **Defining the Team's expected results by the end of 2011: We see arriving at these in two ways:**
  - As our work progresses, we will reexamine the measurable results and milestones developed during the visioning phase, and may recommend changes.
  - We have just begun to create a set of outcomes for our work this first year, which we will share with the Board and others at a later time.

#### **Part 4: Unresolved Issues**

With each meeting, we discover issues that go into our “parking lot” and that we will address during the year:

- Clarity about what we mean by “intentional” spiritual development practice.
- A clear definition of what we mean by spiritual development, participation and opportunities, whether such participation includes a certain number of hours, a certain level of effort, or some other measurement.
- Investigation and development of commonly accepted levels of participation and numbers of opportunities which deem a church successful in adult spiritual development.
- How to account for or eliminate duplicative numbers, assuming we want to get to more accurate results.
- What type of follow-up we can do with committees that have requested additional resources. The process encouraged everyone to think bigger, but where do the resources come from? And, who will address the committee needs and dreams that resulted from the meetings so far?

While we recognize that questions of spirituality and spiritual practice are difficult, if not impossible, to truly measure, we have approached our work in good faith. We have struggled, as have other Vision Statement and Goal One working groups, with questions of what constitutes "intentional," what is "spiritual practice," and what is the obligation of the church in terms of supporting individuals' "spiritual development." We welcome insights from the Board, and hope that what we have done so far gets us closer to accomplishing measurement where measurement is possible, and to choosing silence where it is not.