

Our new church mission statement

Report to Congregation June 6, 2021

Your Board has approved a new Mission Statement for First Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg to be presented to the congregation on June 6, 2021 for adoption and affirmation.

We are a diverse and caring community that is loving, inclusive, responsible, and encouraging.

We are a learning community open to evidence and varied insights that encourages reflection and exploration. We use what we learn to strengthen our relationships and our capacity.

We are a socially engaged community that works collaboratively, compassionately and urgently for a just society and for our life-sustaining planet.

We are Caring, Learning and Socially engaged

This baby is nine months in the making since our all-congregation workshops last September. An important companion to the mission statement is *What you told us – with quotes*, which thematically organizes paraphrase and quotes from the September consultations. This document is rich in detail and insights for mission implementation (<https://uuwinnipeg.mb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/What-you-told-us-with-quotes.pdf>).

This very richness presented a major challenge and several alternative mission versions. To narrow the field, we called on Rev. Linda Thomson once more to facilitate a final workshop in March of former participants to review and evaluate the options that had been prepared to date. Linda took the concerns she heard from that workshop and formulated the version above that we are proposing to the congregation. Her version was vetted by workshop participants, with some discussion, and passed the test of consensus approval.

To reach consensus, we reminded ourselves that it was impossible to capture every nuance and priority within a mission statement without losing impact through an excess of adjectives. But that content need not be lost. The Nested Bowls graphic at the end shows that the mission occupies a key but limited place in the values and goals that guide us. We still have all our principles, aspirations, and covenant of right relations as our values; they haven't been jettisoned! We still let the public know all that we do through our web site. And we have more work yet to do in formulating further ends or goals for our congregation, aided by *What you told us*.

We owe Linda deep gratitude for making this sometimes contentious project work. She advised the working group throughout, ably facilitated our larger sessions in September and March, and distilled what she heard into the mission statement we are proposing to the congregation. Thank you, Linda!

Thanks are also due to the Board mission/vision working group, which shepherded the process: Lauren Bailey, Heather Emberley, Bonnie Thiessen, Cate Ziegler and Peter Miller; to the March focus group participants: Steve Lennon, Carolyn Hill-Carroll, Esther Kathryn Klassen, Carolyn Garlich, Paula Keirstead, Marlene Schellenberg, Jo'Anne Kelly, Janine Reid, Lauren Bailey, Heather Emberley, and Peter Miller; and to the many participants in our September workshops and committee focus groups. Thank you all!

What roles does the mission statement play?

- It calls the attention of the public and ourselves to who we are and what we do.
- It has a role in strategic planning by grounding the ends and goals that we create and try to achieve.
- It can guide our governance by being reflected in committee and board mandates and by reviewing our governance structures and processes to make sure they support our mission effectively.
- Likewise, it can guide role expectations, job descriptions and accountability by asking how staff and volunteers contribute to the achievement of our mission.
- It can support our stewardship campaigns by clarifying the mission that folks are asked to support.

What is next?

An immediate priority is to initiate planning to recover from our dire financial circumstances and identify strategic goals to make our mission live. How can we live into our new mission in financially viable ways?

