

Report by the Coordinating Team on the Global End of Fellowship March 2007

Introduction

With this report we begin the third round of reviewing efforts to achieve the Global Ends established by the Board of Trustees. The topic is Fellowship, and the Global End states:

UUCB is an intergenerational community where we interact with one another in trust, reverence, joy, and love. UUCB is a welcoming, caring, vibrant and ever more diverse congregation, overcoming barriers that divide the human family.

A year ago we reported being well on our way to creating the community described in this statement. The progress continues. The structure of the report follows the ten Nested Goals for Fellowship established by the Board and reviews actions on Objectives established by the Coordinating Team to reach these nested ends. The Nested Ends include:

1. Church members communicate clearly.
2. All groups are well connected and coordinated.
3. People participate actively in church life and feel recognized and appreciated for their contributions.
4. There are strong relationships between the generations.
5. Our congregation is welcoming, friendly and accepting.
6. Our personal relationships within the church community are constantly growing stronger.
7. Our covenant of right relations establishes a standard for our relationships.
8. Members find comfort at the church in times of transition.
9. Children are safe in the church.
10. The church offers a safe refuge for the community in times of disaster.

Objectives

1. Church members communicate clearly.

a. Include clear communication in the Covenant of Right Relations

The **Covenanting Project Team** has sponsored a series of activities over the last eighteen months to engage the congregation in creating a covenant of right relations. These included two workshops open to everyone and meetings with groups within the church that have or want to have covenants. The

proposed congregational Covenant of Right Relations will appear in the April Beacon on the Hill with an invitation to respond. Depending on what the responses are, the Team may bring the proposal to you at your April meeting to be included on the agenda of the Annual Meeting of the congregation in May. The proposed wording is:

Proposed UUCB Covenant of Right Relations

We covenant to build a religious community guided by love and sustained by respectful relationships. Believing that building healthy relationships is a spiritual practice, we aim to listen appreciatively, speak with care, express gratitude, honor our differences, and assume good intentions. We endeavor to communicate directly, honestly, and compassionately, particularly when we are in conflict. When we hurt one other, we will try to make amends and reconnect in a spirit of love. In celebration of the common purpose that unites us, we will do our best to abide by this covenant.

b. Encourage the inclusion of clear communication in group covenants.

The Covenanting Project Team reports that all major lay and staff leadership groups in the church have covenants. All Chalice Circles have covenants. They estimate that at least a third of the congregation is active in small groups that have adopted covenants. These covenants affirm clear communication and most are read regularly and referred to for guidance in each group's work.

c. Strive to model clear communication within the Coordinating Team.

The **Covenant of the Coordinating Team** includes items such as: working collaboratively, listening appreciatively, checking-in, appreciating, apologizing, engaging one another in discussions and decision-making, and fostering direct communication. By reading this covenant each time we gather we remind ourselves of our intentions and renew our commitment to embodying them.

2. All groups are well connected and coordinated.

a. Improve collaboration and communication between committees, as perceived by committee chairs in 2006.

Twenty-eight lay leaders attended the third annual **Network** convocation on October 30, 2006. In addition to brief reports on the Council's function, attendees used a lively variation of "Café Conversations" (alternately described as "a weird UU version of musical chairs") to discuss and select 16 priorities from nearly 40 that had been submitted. There was consensus that the three objectives of the meeting were met, averaging 4.2 on a 5 point scale. This was the third year we asked "to what degree does *this meeting* reflect [the Fellowship Ends Statement]. The 20 responses to this question averaged 4.7 on a 5 point scale, compared to 4.4 last year

The **Council** took the priorities chosen by the Network and developed a "voting guide" that was distributed to the congregation so all members could "sticky dot" their priorities for the coming year. Thirty-two percent of the congregation participated in the voting, down slightly from last year, possibly the result of a sign-in requirement for voting this year. The results are as follows and will be used in developing objectives and allocating resources for 2006-07.

- Becoming a Green Sanctuary
- Fair Compensation for staff
- Growing UUCB, in part by attracting more young adults, and becoming a multi-racial/multicultural congregation
- Signing a Covenant of Collaboration with the UU Legislative Ministry of California.

The Council hopes to encourage wider participation next year, particularly since a review of what has happened to the last two years of priorities suggests this process really does impact the direction of UUCB. Out of nine priorities established in the past two years, we have made progress on nearly all of them.

- Health insurance for the staff, a priority from 05/06, was implemented in December of 2005.
- Expanding the Religious Education program was a priority for the last two years. The number of children participating this year over last year is up over 36% and we have a thriving Chrysalis program.
- Establishing a covenant of right relations, a priority of the past two years, continues with the Covenanting Project Team.
- The Intern program has been continued.
- We look forward to solar panels this year.
- Twenty-one families with young children have joined in the 18 months since Rev Chris was called by this congregation, compared to 17 in the previous two years
- The World Peace Committee provided seed money for support of four educational programs including adult education programs and tree planting in Haiti (\$2000) and collected \$309 for the World Food Program (all part of the Millennium Goals). On 15 October the congregation was part of an new entry in the Guinness Book of World records for "Stand up Against Poverty".

- Though pledge levels did not allow us to make significant progress on Fair Compensation, we did bring our lowest paid employees up to at least the minimum level of \$10/hour, and made some progress with the salary of our new Minister of Religious Education
- We hired a publicist last August and are sorry to report that she resigned six weeks later, due to being offered full-time work elsewhere. During that time, we learned a lot about the challenges of publicity in the Bay Area and hope to use that information in our ongoing outreach efforts.

Almost all increases in operating costs in the last two years have been for the priorities voted by the congregation

3. People participate actively in church life and feel recognized and appreciated for their contributions.

a) Continue to support the work of the Appreciation Circle and Committee on Ministry.

The **Appreciation Circle** meets monthly and sends each month an average of 35 postcards of appreciation to members of the congregation for contributions to the community.

Members of the **Committee on Ministry** take turns writing notes of appreciation to people who have made special contributions after each Sunday service. These include lay speakers, dancers, special musicians, and dramatists, among others.

b) Continue to honor groups who have served the church by inviting them to light the chalice.

We have focused less on this objective in the last year. Often the person lighting the chalice has been the lay person who is later speaking at the “Sharing Our Story.”

c) Work with Council to identify additional ways to honor and recognize volunteer efforts within the committee structure.

While this continues to be an objective of the Coordinating Team, the Council has not yet started to work in this area. The Awards Committee has had some conversation about enlarging the number and types of awards it presents.

A wonderful event took place last December 9th that relates to both appreciation and honoring of volunteer efforts and the desire to keep connections strong among members. The Coordinating Team and Board of Trustee officers

created and staffed the **Past Presidents Breakfast**. Seventeen past presidents of the Board of Trustees were appreciated for their service to the church and were presented the emerging ideas in the draft Strategic Plan.

4. There are strong relationships between the generations.

a) Have monthly Intergenerational Fellowship Fun nights to get together for no other reason than to build community and have a good time.

Throughout last year and the beginning of this one, **Game Night**, as it has come to be called has become quite a success. There is a core of regular attendees and a wider circle of people who attend somewhat regularly. What is most exciting is that a number of new members have used Game Nights to meet people.

The structure of game night also has grown as time has progressed. In addition to board games there are now regularly role playing adventure games. There have been sporty games like basketball and capture the flag and on a particularly exciting and very well attended night, a Playstation was connected to our projection screen and Dance Dance Revolution was played on the large screen in the Fireside Room.

b) Sustain and further the work of the Religious Education Team and its Task Forces

The **Religious Education Team** is in an exciting time of its existence. Now with a number of months under its belt the Team is getting grounded in its identity and beginning to get some really good work done. The many task forces as well have greatly assisted the RE program in its growth. Specific achievements of this group were detailed in the Education Report in January.

c) Support the revitalization of Campus Ministry at UC Berkeley through collaboration with the church's existing committee and new seminarian volunteer leadership

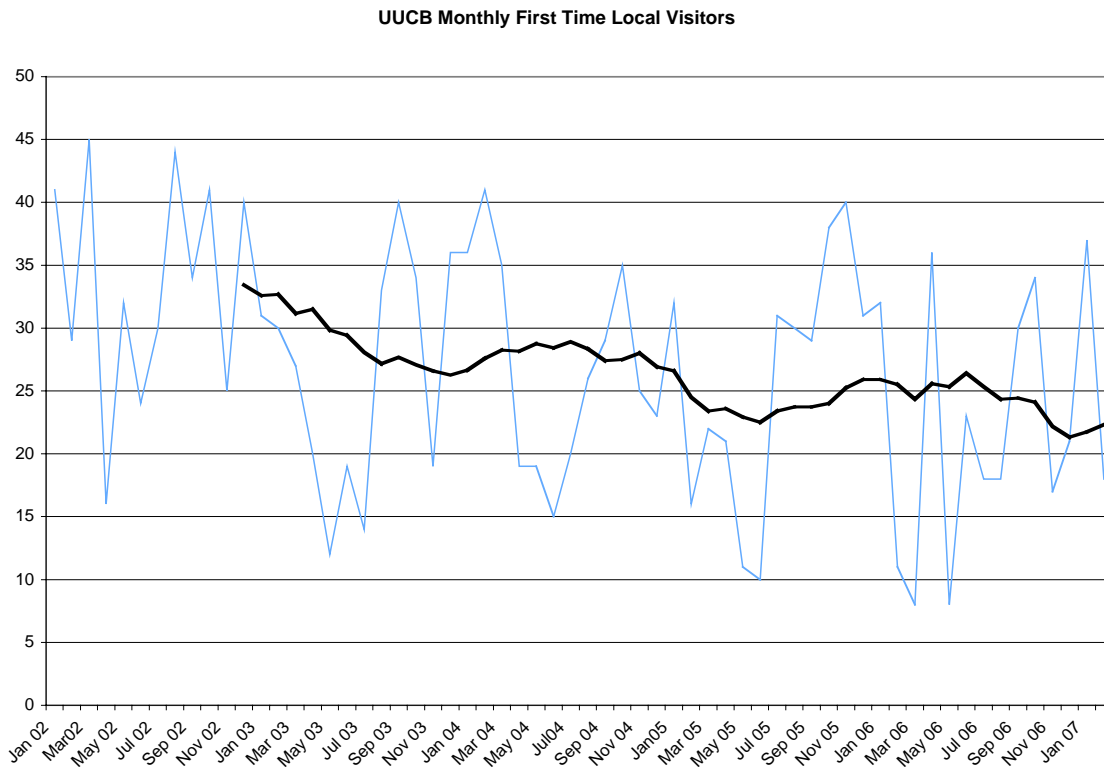
In the past it has been reported that the story of **Campus Ministry** at UUCB is like the story of Sisiphus. It is a pleasure to announce that the rock is securely fastened to the top of the hill. At the beginning of this year, we were awarded a grant from the UUA to help establish a modestly stipended position for the Campus Minister. After months of interviewing and searching for just the right person, the Campus Ministry Committee found a wonderful seminarian Darcey Baxter who we hired. She is helping coordinate an energetic and committed new group of students at Cal. Part of her position is also being a resource for

involvement in Young Adult Ministry at UUCB in a broader context than just campus ministry.

5. Our congregation is welcoming, friendly and accepting.

a) *Increase number of first time visitors by at least 5%, to 350 in fiscal year 2005-2006.*

In fiscal year 2005-2006 UUCB had 317 first time guests, but unfortunately the trend has been down almost ever since then. The heavy dark line is the 12 month trend, which is a “moving average” of the previous 12 months. The slight upturn in the past few months suggests we will end up with about 280 guests by the end of the fiscal year.

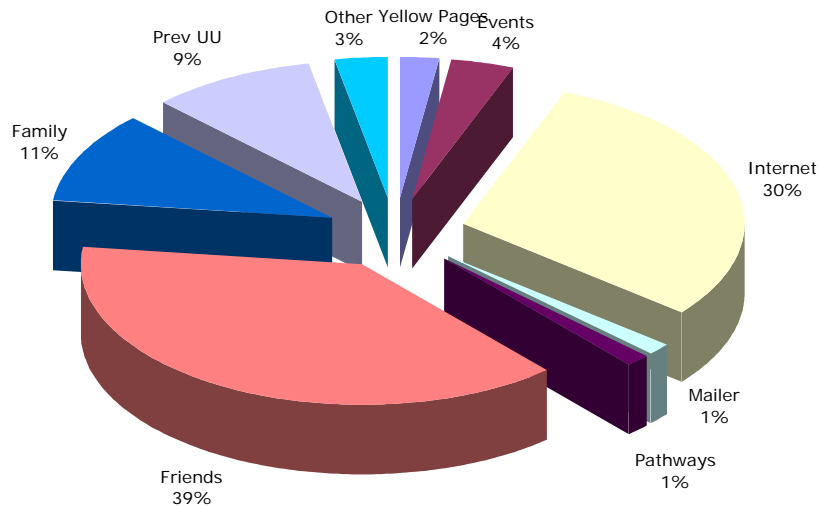


This is despite several mailings, 2 “bring a friend Sundays”, and the attempt to hire a publicist described above. In fact, the number of visitors who said they came to UUCB because of mailings or events actually dropped from 2005 to 2006, though those coming at the invitation of “friends and family” increased from 45% to 50%. The Internet was named as the source by 30% of our guests, up from 26% in 2005. This factor has been rising steadily each year.

Great strides have been taken in the last year to update our web site. Currently, in addition to written versions, pod casts of sermons are available to be heard. Pod casts of Personal Theology presentations are also available. UTube technology has enabled us to have several short video/audio clips

welcoming people to the web site, giving them a sense of worship at UUCB, and inviting them to visit the church.

UUCB 2006 Source of Visitors



The increase in “family and friends” as a source is somewhat misleading in that this category was a higher percentage of a smaller total, so actually decreased very slightly. We surveyed our members after the first “bring a friend” Sunday and found many who were uncomfortable asking, so Membership will be providing some support for the next one on March 28. March 28 and Easter will also be featured in a large mailing (tentatively 4000 postcards) to “new movers” in the area in mid March.

In preparation for the **Fall 2007 Bay Area Regional Marketing Campaign** for which the UUA and seventeen congregations are working together, much activity is on-going at the church to explore how we can make ourselves visible to religious searchers in the area, and how we can welcome them into our congregations

The ministers of the church are part of the **Sparks for Growth** study group of eleven ministers from seven mid-size congregations in the Pacific Central District considering church growth. They met five times this year including leading a retreat last Spring involving five lay leaders from each congregation, titled: Sparks for Growth: Feeding the Fire of Commitment. The team from UUCB organized a Labor Day Weekend retreat for church members on the same theme. About 25 people attended.

In addition, the Second Thursday 7:30 programs September – March (continuing through May) having focused on hospitality and how we can better welcome strangers.

The ministers attended a two-day retreat led by Rev. Larry Peers, an Alban Institute consultant, on the theme: **Mapping Our Ministries: Honing the Practices of Narrative Leadership**. This was followed by an all-day Saturday event (January 13th), also led by Larry Peers, attended by lay and clergy teams from 30 congregations. It was titled “**Mapping Uncharted Territory: New Directions for Growing Vital Congregations**,” was sponsored by the PCD, and was hosted by UUCB. Approximately 20 members of the church were involved in this event that brought more than 250 to the church.

b) *Add at least 50 new members in fiscal year 2005-2006.*

Correlating directly to the drop in visitors is our lowest number of new members in at least ten years.

Membership
New Members: 10-Year Totals

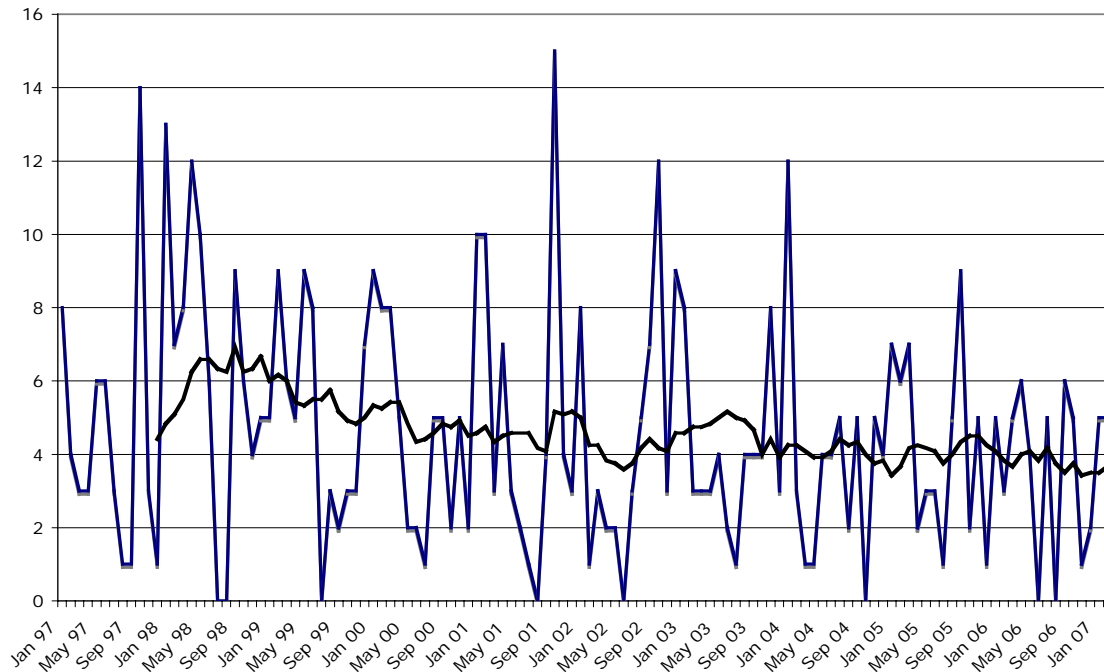
1997	53
1998	80
1999	60
2000	54
2001	62
2002	55
2003	46
2004	46
2005	51
2006	42

Our visitor-to-member conversion rate has actually improved in the past year, from 14-15% in 2003-2005 to 16% last year, but does not make up for the drop in visitors. Evangelical churches and the UU congregations in Houston suggest this rate could go as high as 25%.

Membership co-chairs Sara Roberts and Jeanelyse Doran Adams continue to work with our ministers to identify and reach out to visitors. As an example, **postcards** are sent to all visitors, and **emails** to all visitors who provide an email address (about a third). Follow up **phone calls** are normally made after 2-3 return visits, and again after 5 or 6, to determine if they might be interested in membership. The latter calls were not made throughout the fall, and may have contributed to some degree to the lower number of members. This supposition is supported by the fact that we have seen a slight improvement in the trend since the calls resumed.

A significant number of visitors are in Chalice Circles. Ministers, the Office Administrator, and a co-chair of the Membership Committee **review lists of visitors and new members monthly** to track their involvement and integration into the congregation. Decisions are made to invite visitors to participate in orientation sessions and to invite new members to join small group ministry groups and attend special new member events.

UUCB New Members



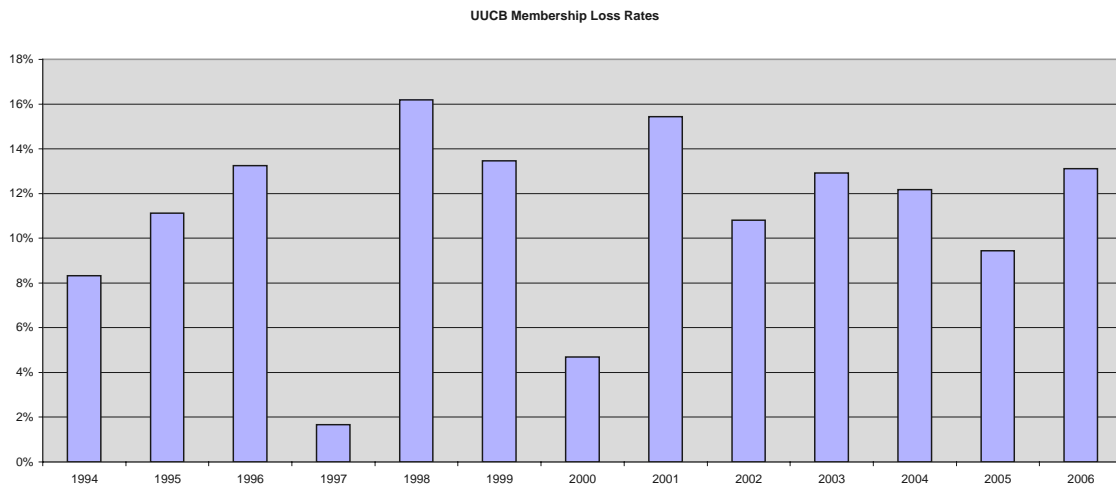
c) Insure that at least 65% of new members are participating in some ongoing activity other than Sunday service within six months of joining.

Tracking of new members through their first six months of membership showed that a year ago, in March 2006, 55% of new members were involved in some ongoing activity beyond Sunday services. By October 2006, the percentage had increased to 67%. The development of Chalice Circles in the last year provides us with a program to involve new members in a way that provides both spiritual/religious growth and deep connections with others.

There are many reasons people are taken off the membership list, including death, moving away, inactivity, and asking to be removed. According to the bylaws, members are required to make an annual financial contribution of record in order to maintain membership. (Scholarships are available for those in need.) If a member makes a contribution of record early in a fiscal year, but has

no activity for the rest of that fiscal year, we continue to list that person as a member through the following fiscal year, unless they have indicated a desire to be removed from the list. Thus, someone may not be active for almost two years before they are removed from the list. Our intention for the future is to screen our reports for lack of financial participation in the current year and to contact people who we expect should be removed from the membership list.

We track the reasons people are removed from membership in order to understand if there are patterns. This graph shows the membership loss rates from 1994 through 2006.



At least some of the unevenness of the loss rates from 1994-2000 can be attributed to the variation in clean up efforts of the membership roster. The chart shows that the two years with the highest rates of loss follow the two years with the lowest rates of loss. The annual “clean up” of the membership list has been done consistently the last six years. We expect to tighten up this process even more over the next year, so we may see some acceleration of losses of people who were gone anyway.

Though not the highest we have experienced, the 13% loss rate (67 members) last year is higher than expected:

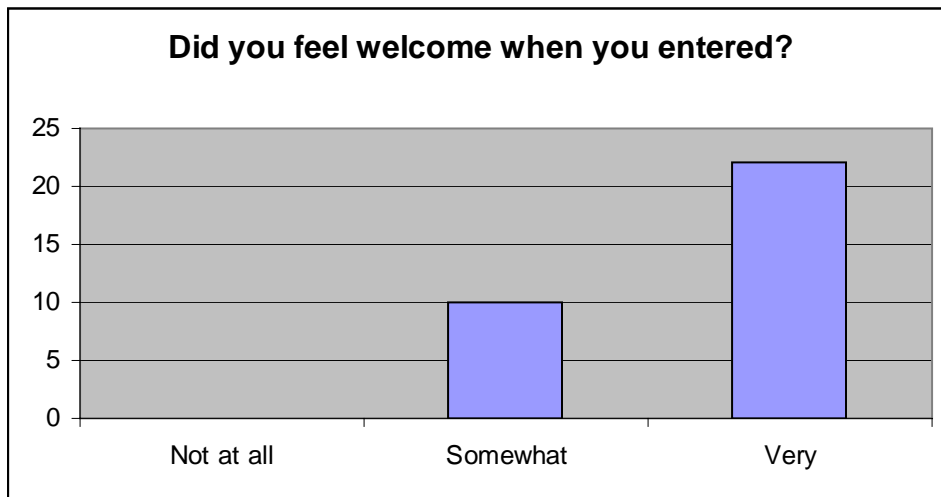
- 14 (2.7% of membership) died. This is higher than normal for a church of our size.
- 30 (5.9% of membership) moved away. This is also higher than normal, and may be reflecting the high cost of living in this area.
- 23 (4.5% of membership) still remain in the area but are not part of the UUCB community. This is also slightly higher than normal, but there appears to be no one primary reason for this.

d) Maintain or improve rating of welcome by visitors as measured by survey.

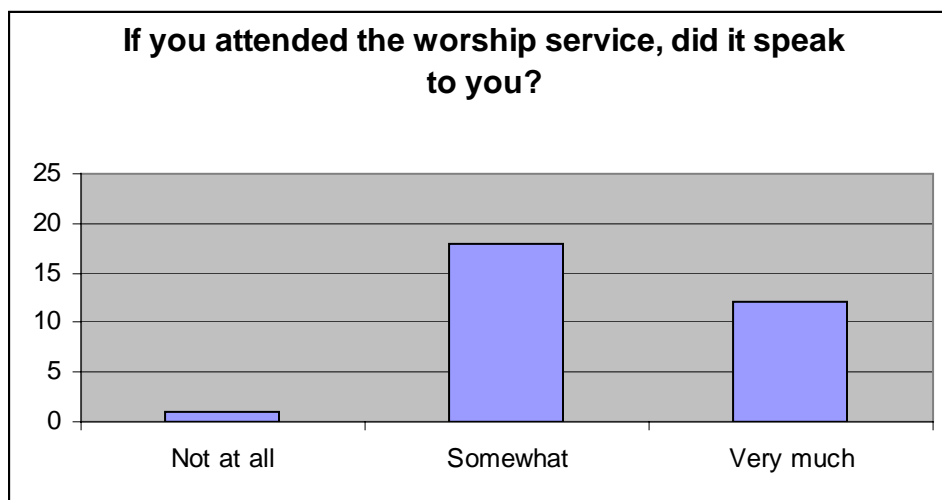
The Third Annual UUCB Guest Survey was completed in March of last year, with 34 guests returning the survey (a 23% return). Though this is a good return for a survey of this type, the results should be viewed as an indicator rather than an absolute. We learned much about how people learned about the church and how welcome they felt.

Thirty-nine percent of the respondents heard about us through the Internet, up from 21% last year. This tracks with last year's "source of visitors" on our guest registration cards, in which 30% of our 2006 visitors cited the Internet. Over half (8/13) of the survey respondents who cited the Internet also cited another source, suggesting the Internet is used to supplement other sources such as friends, family, and (in 2 cases) the Berkeley Forum. Not surprisingly, 9 of the 11 who were 40 and under consulted the Internet, versus 4 of the 20 who were over the age of 40. Friends and family together accounted for 45% of our guests, which is consistent with our registration cards (50%). **Over half of our target audience of families with children at home cited the Internet as one of their sources.**

In response to the question "did you feel welcome when you entered?", responses averaged 2.7 on a scale of 1-3, with 1 being "not at all", and 3 "very".



This suggests that UUCB is well positioned for the Bay Area Regional Marketing Campaign scheduled to start in September, though we can always improve in this area. The feeling of welcome appears to be slightly lower for those 40 and under, who averaged 2.5, though this is a small difference that should be viewed carefully and corroborated by other information. This same slight difference appears in response to the question "did [the worship service] speak to you?" where those 40 and under averaged 2.2 and in total the average was 2.4 (about the same as last year):



There was no difference in perceptions of either the welcome or the sermon for people who came once or twice versus more than twice. However, those who felt “very” welcome indicated that more people talked to them.

You can see all the details of the survey, including the comments, by going to <http://www.surveymonkey.com/Report.asp?U=189138873781>

e) implement a new version of the “Path to Membership” orientation by year end.

Membership Committee members are using Orientations to UUCB once a month to welcome prospective members and enable them to learn more about UUCB. These sessions are co-led by a lay leader and minister and provide an opportunity to encourage people to consider joining. The following week a lay leader and minister lead a Joining UUCB program with information provided to each new member about UUCB with a discussion of the points of Integrity of Membership. While Orientation participation and New Member signups were low in Fall 2006 (due to the lack of follow-up phone calls) we reinstated phone calls in January. In February 2007 we saw increased participation in both programs. The membership committee has created lists of 10 reasons to visit UUCB, 10 reasons to join, and 10 reasons to invite a friend.

6. Our personal relationships within the church community are constantly growing stronger.

*Work with the leadership already in place to bring about **Chalice Circles** by:*

1. Recruiting at least 12 leaders by January and facilitating Chalice Circle for leaders, “Circle Prime”, beginning in October.

2. Partnering with groups like the Membership Committee to create and distribute literature and information about Chalice Circles.

3. Have at least six Chalice Circles up and running by June and have feedback to use in fine tuning the groups for next year.

Last March we reported sixty-four people were involved in seven **Chalice Circles**. Those Circles completed the program in May. New ones (thanks to Markate Daly) were organized in the fall, and an additional one began in January 2007. Currently there are fourteen Chalice Circles with 130 people involved. Each Circle meets twice a month.

The facilitators participated in a training session and attend one additional monthly meeting, where they gather with other facilitators. They choose whether to come to a “First Friday” or “Second Tuesday” meeting. Chalice Circle participants are long time members and people who have not yet joined, and everything in between. Chalice Circles are proving to be a wonderful way for people to get to know one another in deep and meaningful ways while practicing the skills of appreciative listening, and thoughtful sharing.

Another program to support personal relationships in the church community growing stronger is the **Committed Couples Class**. In October, six couples participated in a Friday night – all day Saturday workshop led by Barbara and Bill. This was the first time they had offered it in this format. On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) all respondents rated “5” for how useful the class was for them.

7.7. Our covenant of right relations establishes a standard for our relationships. |

See 1. a) above. The Covenanting Project Team hopes to have a final proposal to you at your April meeting, so that the UUCB Covenant of Right Relations can be on the agenda of the Annual Meeting in May for adoption by the congregation.

8.8. Members find comfort at the church in times of transition. |

a) Support the Caring programs of the church (Caring Circle, Caring Companions, etc.) and track number of calls made, cards sent, casseroles delivered and visits.

A year ago there was a group of volunteers called **Caring Companions** who made visits with members of the congregation needing support. While individuals from that group continue to do so, the group decided to suspend its

monthly meetings. This is a church program that came into being because of the interest of several lay members, and, as that interest has waned, we'll need to see what emerges. The necessity continues to offer spiritual and emotional support to people in need of a listening companion, especially during the dying process, but also because of illness, isolation or other troubling circumstances. Currently ten members of the congregation are visited regularly by Caring Companions. Their coordinator Lucy Scott is a contact for end of life issues and for members needs as they arise.

The **Caring Circle** has clarified their mission which is "to coordinate help for members in need." The Caring Circle is a small group and they welcome assistance from the Wider Circle of Caring in the congregation.

The Caring Circle uses excel software programs to produce and update a **directory** of the ways members are willing to serve and as a **tracking record** of the congregation's participation in the Wider Circle of Caring.

Each month one member of the Caring Circle is "**on call**" for pastoral concerns, and one member hosts the Supercard signing. If the monthly on call person is not able to meet a request made directly by a member of the church community or suggested by the ministers she calls a volunteer from the Wider Circle of Caring list and briefly notes results. At the end of the month the record is passed on to the next on call person. The ideal is to have the on call person be responsible for seeing to it that caring efforts are broadly shared in the community so that no one person is overburdened.

During the first meeting of the month the Caring Circle members check in on a list of members with pastoral care concerns, people to whom the circle regularly write notes and make phone calls. The second meeting of the month is educational on aspects of offering care. The Caring Circle offers welcome cards and casseroles when a baby arrives into the life of a family.

The Caring Circle sponsored the holiday **poinsettias** project in which at least 38 plants were delivered to UUCB members and friends. Members of the Caring Circle helped host the Valentine's Tea for elders. They sponsor the weekly **Super Cards** for members and friends to sign to send to people with special circumstances. Approximately three Super Cards are created each Sunday.

At the beginning of each Sunday service people are invited to light a candle and write in the **Memory Book** thoughts that may be spoken in the Meditation and Prayer. Members of the Committee on Ministry take turns being a **listening presence** for joys and sorrows following each Sunday service.

b) The Membership Committee will keep in regular contact (at least monthly) with all new members for the first 12 months of

membership, and identify any major transitions, celebrations, or losses to the appropriate church groups for action.

We continue to improve the input from the **New Member Coordinators** as these volunteers become more comfortable with the specifics of the job of supporting members who join each month. In addition, the Membership co-chair and two ministers review new members monthly to identify where pastoral care or other contacts might be appropriate.

9. Children are safe in the church.

Educate congregation on established policies around children's safety through articles in church publications and public display of policies.

The Religious Education Team has examined the safety policies previously established by the church through the work of the Safe Congregation committee. They are exploring having expanded background checks for employees and volunteers and hope to offer new policies by the beginning of the 07-08 church year.

The Safe Congregation committee has supported the work of the Covenanting Project Team over the last eighteen months, believing a congregation-wide Covenant of Right Relations will enhance the safety of people of all ages. They may be called into action at any time if there is a concern about anyone's safety.

~~10~~10. The church offers a safe refuge for the community in times of disaster.

a) Investigate the use of UUCB as a community center in times of disaster for inclusion in February of 2006 priority voting.

As reported a year ago, meetings were held with representatives from the Red Cross to review the use of UUCB and a **disaster relief center**. Because of the absence of showers the church cannot be a long term site, but can be an emergency meeting place and house people on a temporary basis. In such situations the Red Cross is responsible for providing all necessary relief.

b) Identify a timeline for the creation of a plan that would address the needs of the church community during times of disaster.

No efforts have been made on this objective.

c) Identify and publicize procedures for response to personal medical emergencies during church functions.

Following on the initial work of Victoria Bowen, RN, who developed a draft set of procedures for use in responding to **medical emergencies** during church functions, Marion Anderson has facilitated conversation among medical, trauma, mental health and pastoral care professionals. The procedures have been affirmed by the Coordinating Team and are posted in the church office. The medical professionals keep in touch with one another to review their readiness to respond if there is an emergency. Marion Anderson also reviewed and updated the medical supplies available at the church for First Aid.