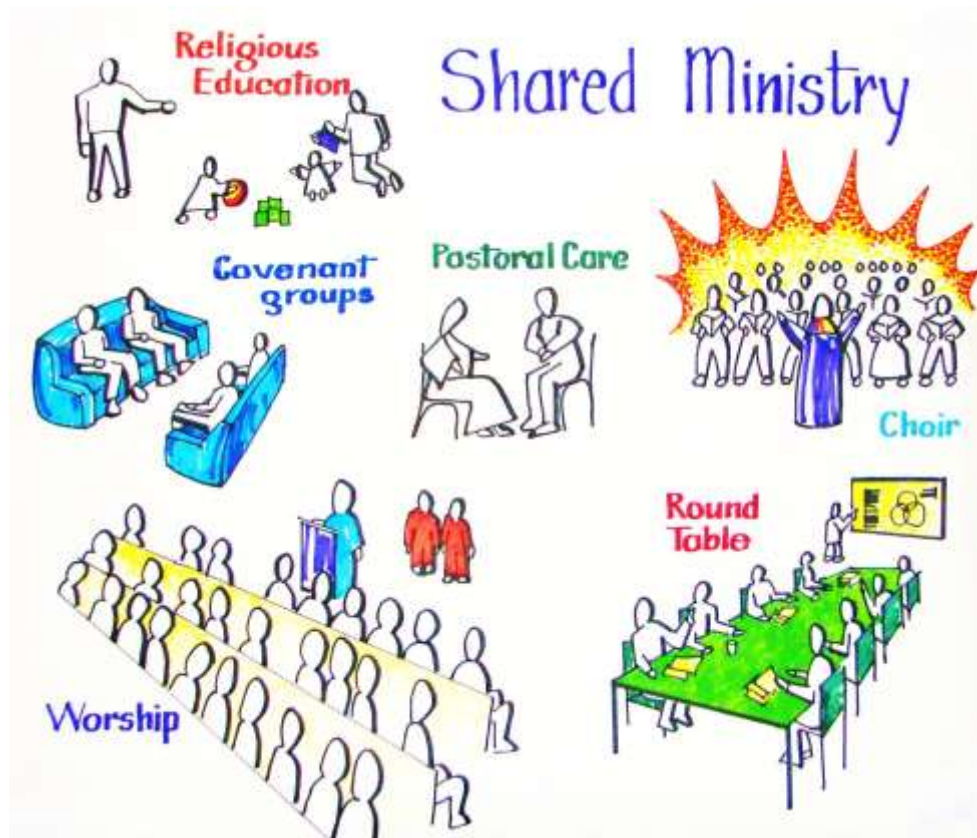




Unitarian Universalist Church of Las Cruces

Dreams

From the Appreciative Inquiry Dream Summit
November 1, 2009



This illustration of one of the Dream Themes was done by Roy Van der Aa. The ideas came from the 70 persons who attended the dream summit.

Dream Theme One: Our Shared Ministry

Our minister is engaged in daily pastoral care of our members, assisted by other church members as appropriate.

UUCLC Sunday services are filled with intellectually stimulating and spiritually moving content and meaning. This rich array of worship experiences is provided by not only our minister, but clergy from a wide array of religious backgrounds.

The UU worship experiences move outside the walls of the church building to places where others yearn for similar kinds of spiritual and intellectual inspiration. The services are so compelling that the media advertises our worship topics. Our minister and worship teams and Religious Education Director partner to create these rich worship experiences.

Dream Theme Two: Living Our Values

The Unitarian Universalist (UU) church of Las Cruces is a shining light of progressive ideas recognized in the community and has a diverse group of congregants: including young, working adults and retirees; Caucasian, Hispanic and other minorities; nearby neighbors and those afar; along with faculty and students from local educational institutions.

We use modern methods of communication like internet blogs, Facebook, and You-Tube to spread our message.

New leaders are willing to come forward to serve and are supported by both long-term and short-term members. We have adopted a city in a nearby country to spread the message of peace and prosperity and have become known as a center of creativity, cultural diversity and intellectual pursuits—through regular sessions in our facility that include both church and non-church members.



Dream Theme Three: Strong Fellowship

The UUCLC is a welcoming and connected congregation, diverse in religious thought and ethnicity, and shares strong fellowship within our church, never forgetting our interconnection with the wider community. All age groups are well represented in our congregation and young and old alike are visible full participants. Our services are attractive to people with diverse backgrounds and ages because they incorporate multiple worship styles, times, and content. We provide transportation to both members and newcomers to church and church-related events. Our church serves as a “safe haven” for a wide variety of back- grounds and beliefs.

We regularly join together not only after both services but throughout the week with a variety of activities. After both services we share discussions over meals and coffee, and we respect diverse dietary restrictions and ethical concerns when planning and preparing food. Outside of services times, we enjoy a variety of group activities, large and small, including many that cater

to families and young, full-time working people. We host events that include big speakers and performers. In addition, there are many opportunities for spiritual retreats (e.g. Peace Camp for adults, men's retreat, and family retreats). We are a church that not only worships together, but enjoys each other's company in a variety of settings.

Our church values training and learning opportunities for both staff and congregation. We provide work-shops about diversity, leadership, UU traditions/history, and where/how to refer out to local social services and community connections, as well as religious education for both young and adult. Through these efforts our congregants become fully informed of our traditions, finding their path within our spectrum of belief and values.

Community outreach and social action is an important part of our spiritual tradition. We share our ideas and beliefs with the wider community through functions such as community seminars, discussion groups, publicity for worship and Roundtable discussions. We energetically support local schools, including an active NMSU campus ministry and outreach to public schools, especially high schools. Through all these efforts the UUCLC shares strong fellowship within our church community, never forgetting our interconnection with the wider world.



Dream Theme Four: Facilities

Our beautiful and functional new church reflects not only our growth but our dedication to "total site planning" and debt reduction in recent years. The size and flexibility of this new facility promotes and accommodates still further growth of both congregation and staff.

Its architecture is considerate of, even inspirational to, the surrounding community. It is environmentally green, ADA compliant and has special features for youth and older members. The sanctuary and the social hall are designed, furnished and equipped to perform their respective functions in support of church life with style and flexibility. We even have a small chapel for meditation and small ceremonies.

The grounds provide not only plentiful parking but a youth recreation area, a memorial garden with columbarium, a large labyrinth, a community garden, and



a parsonage. Long-range plans envision development of a residential community around the church complex.

Dream Theme Five: Finances

Our dream is to see a culture of generosity develop in our church and expand it into the greater community. We are accomplishing our dream by becoming a debt free congregation. We use gifts and pledges to establish a firm foundation to pay our expenses and establish realistic contingency funds for future needs.

We expand beyond our church perimeters by producing good programs that are open to the greater community and both interest our church family and attract people from the surrounding areas. The programs are funded by charging a reasonable fee or through grants and bequests. In this way we reach out to possible new members and at the same time we do not infringe on our operating budget.

The activities of all committees, such as Coffee Hour, the gallery, and adult programs, etc., operate within the donations collected, and we charge a set fee for facilities used by outside groups. We use fund raising projects only for special needs, not to support the operating budget.

Our finance process (budgeting, pledging, collecting and spending) is transparent so everyone can understand our needs and how we support them. We are always open to suggestions from the congregation and everyone who wants to be part of the financial planning. Developing finances is fun and we work together to live within our means.

