



LOVE IN ACTION

A Strategic Ministry Plan for Unity Church of Overland Park

2023 - 2025

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OUR STORY

Unity Church of Overland Park continues to move toward a world powerfully transformed through the growing movement of shared spiritual awakening!

To discern our continuing role in this awakening, the Leadership Council set forth to develop a new strategic ministry plan for our congregation- one that facilitates and co-creates love in action. This plan is meant to be dynamic, shaped, and fulfilled by a dynamic congregation. The congregation will be given opportunities to participate in tactical planning for the fulfillment of the strategic plan.

It should be noted, the strategic planning process conforms to the process for envisioning and strategic planning stipulated by our bylaws. To that end, an overarching goal of the planning process was to include as much congregational input as possible. Various vehicles were utilized to meet this goal including a congregational survey and feedback provided during Sharing Circles, along with input from the staff.

Through prayerful reflection and utilizing the results of both the congregational survey and input from the ministerial team and key volunteers, the Leadership Council developed the first edition of *Love in Action!*

An added input source were conversations with UCOP lay leaders and staff in October, 2022. These conversations provided for recommendations and feedback of the proposed Plan.

This Strategic Plan is titled *Love in Action*, and is the result of a renewal/refreshment process incorporating UCOP past and present, with vision for the future. This edition reflects a broad spectrum of prayer and discernment regarding our congregation's future. It is intended to be a platform for specific accountability groups within our congregation (Standing Committees, Ministry Teams, Affinity/Small Groups, etc.) to design specific implementation steps (tactics) in line with their own wisdom regarding our congregation's future. The strategic plan will be the foundation for developing a fiscally responsible operating budget that supports our goals and vision for the future.

In summary: this plan presents a strategic direction for our congregation for the next three years. Most critical, however, is continued reliance on Divine Guidance and adaptability. Alignment with the principles of Truth in dynamic and versatile ways is the crucial factor as we express love in action as a church family in the coming years.

OUR APPROACH

The strategic ministry plan that follows consists of seven components: values, priorities, mission, vision, vision targets, breakthrough goals, and strategic initiatives. These seven elements reappear as keys to effectiveness in successful organizations.

Consider each component, then, to be an important part of our overall plan. In essence, they complement and “drive” one another—contributing to the impact of the entire document.

□ **VALUES: Our Core Commitments**

Every group or organization has cherished ideas or beliefs that undergird their outlook and activity. These core values provide rich soil from which present life is formulated, along with direction for the future.

□ **PILLARS: Our Areas of Focus**

We are called to prioritize our personal life and church life around five spiritual priorities: Spiritual Transformation, I.D.E.A. (Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility), Prayer/Meditation, Unity Principles, and Community. Mission and vision occur best within these priorities, allowing us to be both faithful and comprehensive as co-creators of love in action.

□ **MISSION: Our Purpose and Reason for Existing**

Every group or organization must articulate who they are and why they exist. For the church, this is especially important since its identity is that of God expressing in the world. We must reaffirm, then, a mission rooted explicitly in Unity principles, the teachings of Jesus, and for a contemporary and diverse world. This mission calls us to proclaim the words of Unity co-founder Charles Fillmore, that we “fairly sizzle with zeal and enthusiasm and spring forth with a mighty faith to do the things that ought to be done by us.”

□ **VISION: Our Dream for the Future**

As a member ministry of Unity Worldwide Ministries, we join with Unity movement in a shared vision. *The Revealing Word* tells us that vision is seeing God as the foundation of all, the source of all, and the substance of all. Seeing the good, the true, and the beautiful everywhere.

□ **VISION TARGETS: Our Vision Directed and Aimed**

The scriptures say that without vision, the people perish. Vision must not ride off in all directions or be allowed to fade away. Like prayer, vision is well served by focus that it may be guided toward specific areas that are a particular calling for a particular time in a congregation’s history.

□ **BREAKTHROUGH GOALS: Our Vision Translated into Specific Results**

Unity Principles call us to live the truth we know as co-creators of Divine Mind. Thus, specific goals are needed to break through the reality of current activity into the vision we are calling into manifestation. The expanding Universe responds to courageous goal setting that seeks new levels of both effectiveness and faithfulness.

□ **STRATEGIC INITIATIVES: Our Vision Translated into Specific Actions**

Ultimately, goals must be translated into action. Charles Fillmore gave this definition of faith: the perceiving power of the mind linked with the power to shape substance (*The Revealing Word*). In short, the power to do the seemingly impossible. A basic first step toward action is to develop strategic initiatives, which provide platforms for more specified, tactical plans.

VISION

(Our Dream for the Future)

A world powerfully transformed through the growing movement of shared spiritual awakening.

MISSION

(Our Purpose)

Unity Church of Overland Park transforms lives and empowers people
to make a difference in the world.

Welcome to Unity Church of Overland Park!

We welcome you just as you are and recognize that each person is on their own unique spiritual journey. We are open and affirming of the LGBTQ+ community and have an affinity group, Folx with Faith, serving the queer community though all are welcome to attend. There are many paths to God and we honor all faiths, backgrounds, ethnicities and diverse expressions of individuals and families. There is a place for you in our spiritual community and we hope you'll join us for our Sunday celebration service, small groups, classes or workshops or special events. At Unity you can connect with like-minded people in an inclusive environment, allowing you to grow spiritually, have fun and experience a fulfilled life of abundance and meaning.

What is Unity?

Unity Church of Overland Park is a diverse spiritual home that embraces and radiates unconditional love, joy, abundance, and inclusiveness. Unity is a positive, practical, and progressive approach to Christianity based on the teachings of Jesus and the power of prayer. Unity honors the universal truths in all religions and respects each individual's right to choose a spiritual path. We are a non-denominational movement. Unity is considered a movement of new thought, providing spiritual education through God-centered beliefs.

OUR VALUES

(Core Commitments)

SPIRIT-LED:

We turn within to Spirit for guidance and active communication.

LOVE:

We express unconditional love, an inner quality that sees good everywhere and in everyone.

INCLUSIVENESS:

We embrace all people as expressions of God.

ABUNDANCE:

We know that God is our Source and celebrate the unlimited possibilities present in every moment.

JOY:

We live from a positive view of the world and celebrate life.

OUR PILLARS

(Areas of Focus)

SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

We are committed to providing transformative experiences and tools. (5th principle)

I.D.E.A. (Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility)

We affirm the divine worth of each individual, the value of diversity and plurality of being as expressions of God, and we commit to expanding accessibility for our experiences, teachings, and events. (1st and 2nd principles)

PRAYER/MEDITATION

Prayer and meditation are at the core of how we experience and embody our divine essence, wholeness, and transformation. (4th principle)

UNITY PRINCIPLES

Founded on the teachings of Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, we focus on Unity teachings including the 5 Principles, Abundance, Healing/Wholeness, as well as other modalities like Spiral Dynamics, Enneagram, and interfaith practices. (5th principle)

COMMUNITY

We live out our oneness together within our congregation (in person and online), in our local community, in the Unity movement, and in the world through our activities. (All 5 Principles)

VISION TARGETS

(Our Vision Directed and Aimed)

Inspire ...personal awareness

Unity is a global, inclusive, spiritual community. We offer practical, uplifting resources to help people of all faiths apply positive spiritual principles to their lives.

Empower ...in the community

Unity's fifth principle says that it isn't enough to know spiritual principles, we must live the truth we know and demonstrate it in the world. This is how we become the presence of love in action.

Magnify ...grow impact

We are a community of collaboration, growth, and accountability. With integrity, we set the intention to magnify our positive impact in the world knowing that we are all here for a time and for a purpose. The nature of the Universe is abundance and we become a channel through which it flows and expresses as the activity of God.

BREAKTHROUGH GOALS

(Our Vision Translated into Specific Results)

Inspire Spiritual Awakening

- Create opportunities for congregational engagement.
- Create opportunities for spiritual development.

Empower Radical Transformation

- Build a greater sense of community/connection in our congregation.
- Establish ongoing relationships with local organizations.

Magnify Abundance

- Increase in-person attendance and participation.
- Increase online attendance and participation.
- Increase contributions.
- Create new revenue streams.
- Fiscal responsibility demonstrated in movement toward balanced operating budget, property storage, building purchase readiness plan/strategy.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

(Our Vision Translated into Specific Actions)

Introduction

The strategic initiatives that follow are not placed in any particular order, including order of importance.

The strategic initiatives are intended to be implemented by various accountability groups within the life of our congregation.

Though generally only one accountability group is listed for each initiative, it is assumed accountability groups are encouraged to work through ministry teams (some listed in the chart/s that follow for illustrative purposes) and other groups within the life of the congregation.

Cooperative, cross-commission/committee efforts are encouraged, rather than unilateral, “silo” approaches.

An Implementation Process is found within this plan (p. 15) -- giving additional details related to the implementation of strategic initiatives.

1. Inspire Spiritual Awakening

1.1 Create opportunities for congregational engagement.

INITIATIVE	ACCOUNTABILITY (COMMISSION/COMMITTEE)
1.1.1. Increase number of virtual participation opportunities to 100% for all service, classes, events.	Staff & AV Team
1.1.2. Identify a path for leadership funnel from visitor to high level participation.	Staff
1.1.3. Small Groups for online congregants, both seasons (Fall Faith and Lenten).	Staff/Volunteer
1.1.4. Establish online volunteers: usher, prayer chaplains.	Staff/Volunteer Coord
1.1.5. Build a UCOP app.	Staff/Consultant

1.2 Create opportunities for spiritual development.

INITIATIVE	ACCOUNTABILITY (COMMISSION/COMMITTEE)
1.2.1. Offer Special services/events for personal growth.	Staff
1.2.2. Offer a Women's retreat.	Women's Group
1.2.3. Offer a Men's retreat.	Men's Group
1.2.4. Offer SEE Classes for credit.	Staff

2. Empower Radical Transformation

2.1 Build a greater sense of community and connection within our congregation.

INITIATIVE	ACCOUNTABILITY (COMMISSION/COMMITTEE)
2.1.1. Appreciation events for volunteers and donors.	Staff
2.1.2. Continue creating accessibility for and relationship with the deaf community. (hybrid hearing/non-hearing environment)	Staff/LC/committee
2.1.3. Intergenerational events with YFM.	
2.1.4. Expand CARE-avan program.	Staff
2.1.5. Name tag design opportunity.	

2.2 Establish ongoing relationships with organizations.

INITIATIVE	ACCOUNTABILITY (COMMISSION/COMMITTEE)
2.2.1. Choose 1-2 target organizations with whom to build an ongoing relationship through volunteer and financial support.	
2.2.2. Establish said relationship and activities.	
2.2.3. Choose 1 or 2 target organizations to collaborate with for spiritual growth and experiences.	
2.2.4. Establish said relationship and activities.	

2.3 Create a “WHY UCOP?” video campaign.

INITIATIVE	ACCOUNTABILITY (COMMISSION/COMMITTEE)
2.3.1. Video series of congregants sharing their stories of transformation and why they choose UCOP.	Staff and volunteers
2.3.2. Distribution plan (social media, radio, cable, etc).	

3. Magnify Abundance

3.1 Increase in-person attendance.

INITIATIVE	ACCOUNTABILITY (COMMISSION/COMMITTEE)
3.1.1. Identify and implement effective approaches to follow-up with first time guests and visitors.	
3.1.2. Increase outreach options for inviting unchurched friends, co-workers, neighbors, etc., especially creative, “out of the box” options.	
3.1.3. Marketing strategy for UCOP brand (signs, local visibility, social media, mailer, etc).	

3.2 Increase online attendance.

INITIATIVE	ACCOUNTABILITY (COMMISSION/COMMITTEE)
3.2.1. Establish social media sharing strategy; invite congregants to share on their social platforms.	
3.2.2. Intentional relationship building with online community.	Staff
3.2.3. Invite online viewers to comment/check in.	
3.2.4. Virtual membership continued.	

3.3 Increase contributions.

INITIATIVE	ACCOUNTABILITY (COMMISSION/COMMITTEE)
3.3.1. Increase number of consistent givers through education of value, church finances, prosperity principles.	
3.3.2. Clearly communication methods of giving.	
3.3.3. Establish legacy/estate giving campaign and awareness.	
3.3.4. Maintain log of estate giving.	

3.4 New revenue streams.

INITIATIVE	ACCOUNTABILITY (COMMISSION/COMMITTEE)
3.4.1. Conference- Create/host a conference for revenue.	Folx with Faith
3.4.2 New FUNdraising event each year (coupon book; Hamburger Mary's bingo; wine tastings; Mardi Gras party).	
3.4.3. Fall Faith Gala (\$50k in 2023).	
3.4.4 UCOP 50 th anniversary capital campaign 3/2024-3/2025	

3.5 Improve fiscal stewardship through strategy.

INITIATIVE	ACCOUNTABILITY (COMMISSION/COMMITTEE)
3.5.1. Resolve burden of storage expenses and items.	LC
3.5.2. Establish plan to eliminate deficit.	
3.5.3. Analysis of budget for purchase of building.	
3.5.4. Determine property purchase readiness factors.	
3.5.5. Identify goals to meet purchase readiness.	

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The UCOP Leadership Council members will be assigned as Coordinators of each Breakthrough Goal at the February 2023 regular Council meeting. As such, each Coordinator will oversee the progress, scheduling, and success of the Strategic Initiatives for each assigned Breakthrough Goal. Staff or Members will be assigned to various committees and teams for each Strategic Initiative. The Chairs of each committee/commission/team will report to the corresponding Coordinator. Coordinators will be primarily responsible for ensuring the specific strategic initiatives remain on track as designated or are moved up or down the priority list as Wisdom and new information come to light. This work will be done collaboratively with leadership, staff, and congregation and require ongoing feedback through conversations and community surveys. It is meant to be a dynamic process that lives and breathes through the community and congregation, not a rigid set of laws limited by yesterday's awareness. As the Strategic Plan becomes activity and action, it will likely require revision to serve the highest good and opportunity for UCOP. We are open, agile, and willing to move with and as Spirit throughout this process.

The Leadership Council will establish a timeline and prioritize initiatives to support the unfolding of this Strategic Plan. The timeline, like the Plan, will be dynamic, agile, and able to accommodate new information, facts, and opportunities. With monthly updates from committees via the Coordinators, prioritization and timelines will be updated as needed.

Committee/Commission/Team Chairs will be invited to present to the Leadership Council and congregation when necessary and will agree to receive and incorporate feedback from the community and Leadership Council in the committee work. The Strategic Plan is not a "top-down" instrument, it is born from the voice of the community and will unfold like a spring blossom with its roots firmly anchored in Spirit, with the nourishment and diligence of the congregation, revealing all that Spirit would lead Unity Church of Overland Park to demonstrate in the world. We are ready for our next unfoldment and proceed with Faith, guided in Wisdom. We are ever committed to being the presence of Love in Action as we yield to the One Presence of Love, in so doing, we establish ourselves as a beacon of Light in the world.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The UCOP Leadership Council hosted a congregational Sharing Circle on October 30, 2022, to present the drafted Strategic Plan to the community. There was much excitement about the UCOP mobile app, the organization and structure of the plan, and the overall sentiment was positive and supportive. The members present indicated low interest in changing the current vision statement. However, there was interest in revising the mission statement and it was determined that a committee would be assembled to lead that process.

The Leadership Council approved the Strategic Plan at the following regular Council meeting on November 16, 2022.

The Strategic Plan was blessed during Sunday service on January 29, 2023, with a special prayer offered live from a Silent Unity prayer associate.

The UCOP Leadership Council has scheduled a congregational Sharing Circle for Sunday, February 26, 2023, for the purpose of engaging members in taking leadership roles for specific strategic initiatives.

The Strategic Plan will be placed on the website along with a timeline. This will give access to members, though it will not serve as the primary place of communication for updated information.

MISSION/VISION

VISION TARGETS

BREAKTHROUGH GOALS

