

The VISION PROJECT TEAMS forming at First Congregational Church UCC of Burlington in early July 2022 are listed here with summary statements and their related preliminary proposals.

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Use this link to select a team to serve with: <https://bit.ly/VisionProjectTeam> - sign ups requested by July 6.

VISION PROJECT TEAM & PROPOSAL

A. Education-Conversation-Community Hub

Focus: Facilitate community education/conversations with topics such as: justice, environment, spirituality, homelessness, local interests; support covenant/target groups (elderly, teens) w/meals, hospitality, conversation, speakers, community involvement. Upgrade security system; renovate building spaces for flexible use, streaming and projection capabilities, art/artwork. Connecting/creating conversation partners from wide swath of

community, bridge building programs, refugees and immigrants supported; music education/performances; cancer support groups, pre-teen coffee house, Vacation Bible School, speakers of interest to college students, non-profit incubator, co-working space. Consider researching FCCB History for deeper look at social justice issues and FCCB involvement

Preliminary Proposals that fall in this Vision Project include:

Proposal Title: Church History

Focus: A revised history of First Congregation Church with a broader look at the history of Burlington and wider social issues. It would look specifically at the history of Native Americans. It would also look at our relationship with eugenics, racism, slavery, etc. We also need to look at the positive.

Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* – How might this proposal apply?
It helps to prepare for the future by knowing our past.

- What would success look like?
A written history that creates a broader story of First Congregational Church and our environs than previous works. Possibly a video.
- With whom might we partner?
UVM history department.

Proposal Title: Exploring Covenant Groups

Focus: Provide an opportunity for all who are interested to participate in a 'covenant group': A small group whose participants agree to a shared set of practices and regular meetings for personal and spiritual growth. Such practices could include lectio divina, guided meditations, centering prayer and/or regular check-ins, etc.

Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* – How might this proposal apply?
The focus here in on building relationships and deepening one's spiritual life.

- What would success look like?
If one or more covenant groups met for a defined period, those persons would then be equipped to help facilitate a new round of groups for a following period. The 'culture' of spiritual practice and deepening relationships could further strengthen our congregation in our shared mission and ministries.
- With whom might we partner?
We could open participation to the wider community. We could also invite persons with special gifts in a specific practice to lead a presentation or workshop.

Proposal Title: Economic security for all

Focus: Work with other groups to help people gain economic security by convincing employers to provide a "livable wage" to all employees. This will foster adequate housing, better food access, health care access. Start with paying our staff the same "livable wage" to model the method, the commitment to this cause by supporting a bottom line expense for staff wages.

Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* - How might this proposal apply?

Provide church space for community meetings to make a plan. Gather in more community people of all diversities to become members to work on this idea of economic security. People to pray, follow Christ's example of helping people who need it, finding out what they need and want to make their lives better. Prayer chains to bring ideas up for solutions, models to try.

- What would success look like?

People in lower paying positions would at least have a better possibility for adequate housing, food supply and health care - the basics of living without fear and constant worry about meeting expenses.

- With whom might we partner?

City of Burlington, South Burlington; State Office of Economic Opportunity; Church Street Business Organization (don't know the name); Small Business Organizations

Proposal Title: Music Education Idea

Focus: Offer a place and opportunities to teach music to those with no or little music background.

Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* – How might this proposal apply?

It seems there's less and less emphasis on music education in schools, and sometimes a lack of opportunity... the result that fewer and fewer people have basic understanding of the language of music. And yet music is foundational to worship in our tradition. We have the space to offer or facilitate music education for the wider community by providing a place where musicians can offer classes and people can come together to learn more about music and/or make music together.

- What would success look like?

Could we start a sort of Music Academy during the week and make space available for musicians to teach and host recitals? Could we offer seminars in reading music or music theory? ...or music history ...or provide opportunities for instrumentalists to practice together in ensembles? ...or sponsor concerts by prof musicians?

- With whom might we partner?

The local arts/performance community, prof musicians, music educators, UVM Music Dept

Proposal Title: Praying with Our Feet

A consistent educational effort beginning with

--scriptural references of Jesus regarding our mandate to care for the poor

--develop an up-to-date directory or hard-copy single sheet of all services and programs within

Vermont, and the Burlington area in particular, that may become avenues to pursue "praying with our feet and accompanying with our hearts.

--Perhaps "intentional recruitment efforts from current Church members participating in JUMP, Meals on Wheels, Dismas House and the Possibility Shop holding an annual "Information and sign Up Fair"
--Asking our Outreach & Adult Education Committees to consider discussing this church-wide Educational effort.

Proposal Title: Community Conversation Hub

Focus: First Church as host to a regularly held forum where ideas and views on various issues can be exchanged. Its mission is to create connection and dialogue between those interested in community development and people in the area who have a stake in the outcomes of that collaboration. The First Church forum would host frequent discussions about "front burner" issues with community residents, local businesses, educators, and entrepreneurs to develop plans and community capacity to resolve long standing challenges. While the strength of the community is in its resource capacity, First Church would use its gifts to access and cultivate the people needed to improve a range of conditions.

Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* - How might this proposal apply?
Continuity in service Reaching Out Presence in the Community Social, racial, and ecological justice Relevant, bold, and visionary Using the building for service and outreach Serving the community

- What would success look like?
First Church Forum is a respected "think tank" through which people with different experiences and viewpoints respectfully discuss pressing issues and challenges of the day with the ability to create sustainable solutions.
- With whom might we partner?
The Burlington Vt. Community Utilize the skills and gifts of all interested constituencies and individuals, including (but not limited to) community leaders, churches, service organizations, business entities, City government and political representatives, the judicial system and health and wellness care providers.

Proposal Title: lunches for smaller groups or community non-profits

Focus: Regularly scheduled small group lunches at the church for specific age groups like elderly or college age. Bring your own lunch or church provides sandwiches - could sing together - might have a speaker

Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* - How might this proposal apply?
use empty church space, get more community members connected to our church

- What would success look like?
Fellowship with each other and volunteers in the community at large. Growth of community services for folks or even new services for folks
- With whom might we partner?
City, local no-profits, other churches

Proposal Title: Church sponsored space for Music

Focus: Music lessons, practice space for musicians, small concerts

Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* - How might this proposal apply use of empty church space and encourage young musicians in the church and community at large

- What would success look like?
Growth of music programs in Burlington
- With whom might we partner?
City, local, other churches, music teachers

Proposal 2) Hospitality In and Out: This visioning idea keeps hospitality front and center on an annual basis. "In" the church, posting pictures of each member in a central place in the building, having on-line stories and introductions by people within the church willing to do so, maintaining a dogged name tag policy (to the point that when someone attends worship without one, ushers make a "stick-em" tag on the spot to facilitate meeting and greeting. Broadening our circle of "closest church friends" so that knowing each other, caring for each other, and loving neighbor as self can be facilitated.

Hospitality "Out"-refers to regular dinners in the dining room with various constituents of downtown agencies doing justice and charity work; our New Alpha Congregation; the homeless folks who hang out on our properties, New American populations, and Abenaki brothers and sisters. The point of these dinners: a) Jesus broke bread with everyone--a critical feature of his ministry; b) to be in relationship and better accompany these folks on their human journeys; c) to better educate ourselves about the services and programs in our area.

Proposal Title: Place for Cancer Support Groups to Meet

Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* - How might this proposal apply

- Different setting in non-medical site - a cozy space in our church
- What would success look like? Encouraging more ties with Ronald McDonald parents, Closer ties with UVM home health and Hospice . Better programs for care-givers
- With whom might we partner? Other Cancer support groups, UVM Home health and hospice , Ronald Mc Donald House, MD offices, clergy

Proposal Title: Engaging Youth and Families

Focus: With admittedly not enough big-picture knowledge of recent history, I'd like to offer this vision idea for First Church: that we find more ways to better bring in families, and young people. Speaking from my personal experience, I found that Sunday School, and youth activities were the impetus for

re-connecting to church-going in my 30s: that is, through my kids, I returned to church. I wanted my children to experience both the Word of God in its many forms, and the kind of support a faith community can bring.

My vision is that we find more ways to offer entree to children, and thus to families, doing things like:
-- create visible outdoor kid-centric events for church-goers and the wider community; things like ice cream socials, music performances, mini-festivals, and the like. The idea would be to enhance the visibility of our activities.

- assigning a member-mentor to new families with kids, to help guide kids into participation
- offer a Vacation Bible School (maybe we do this already) to introduce younger children to stories and messages in the Bible, and create their first encounter with the Church
- offer a monthly child activity/childcare night; a chance for kids to have fun activities, and for parents to get a short break for an adult activity, or date-night for themselves.
- think of ways to enhance youth group, maybe in conjunction with other churches, as we have been doing
- come up with additional service opportunities for youth
- continue to grow opportunities for youth to participate in worship
- come up with a recurring aspirational summer program for teens
- consider a teen/pre-teen coffeehouse, drop-in site, maybe off our campus
- big picture item that others have suggested: help create some kind of daycare option for families, perhaps with partners, using church facilities.

There are likely many other and better ideas for ways of appealing to families seeking the benefits of Christian community. I think that the things we do would benefit both newcomers and long-established parishioners alike.

Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3&4* - How might this proposal apply?

The activities I suggest would require resources, time, energy, and personal engagement. But in some ways are just enhanced versions of things we may already be doing.

- What would success look like?

One measure of success might be growth in our church membership, another might be increased engagement of all our church community. Another would be increased child participation.

- With whom might we partner?

We might partner with other churches for youth events; We might partner with agencies or service providers for service projects; we might partner with non-profit daycare providers to create daycare.

Proposal Title: United Nations of Burlington

Focus: Since 1980, Vermont has welcomed more than 8,000 refugees into our community. A lot of them have done very well, while others still struggle - with homesickness, the language, poverty, isolation.

How about we hold monthly meetings at the church, open to the entire community, free of charge, to meet some of the refugees. Hopefully it would result in some of the audience volunteering to help those who need help.

The organization called "USCRI" (US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants) , which is in charge of resettlement, has offices in Colchester.

We could start by having some of the leadership of that organization. They could describe the history of the organization. Then they could talk about the refugees, the volunteers, the current needs etc. They have a good website you could peruse. (Their names and contacts are below)

On following months, we could have 2 or 3 members of the various refugee communities speak about their experience (why they left home; how long it took to be accepted as US refugee; what they first thought of Vermont when they arrived; how hard life has been for them; that kind of thing.) It would need to be people with good English. IF they're comfortable taking questions, that would be part of the program.

Some of these folks have gotten college degrees, most of them have jobs, many have become US citizens, some own homes - although most still rent in Winooski and the Old North End. But a lot of them have slipped through the cracks, and still need help. Most of the various groups look after each other, but some are still very isolated. They're all homesick for their families; most of them send money 'home' each payday.rs:

Vermont has received refugees from:

- Afghanistan
- Bhutan
- Bosnia
- Burma (Myanmar)
- Burundi
- Republic of Congo
- Iraq
- Kosovo
- Sudan
- Somalia
- Syria
- Vietnam

Partners:

US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
462 Hegeman Avenue, Suite 101
Colchester, Vermont 05446
Phone: 802 655 1963
Email: vrrp@uscrrt.org

Amila Merdzanovic, Director of Vermont USCRI Office
Sonali Samarasinghe, Coordinator of Interpretation and Translation
Casey Reese, Employment Counselor
Lilian Mute, Reach-Up Case Manager

Proposal Title: First Church Hub

Focus: A multi-spoked, connected campus that serves to:

- Nurture spirit in service, music, meditation, and life milestones
- Support families in specific areas where there are gaps: early child-care and tween-teen community engagement and service
- Serve the disenfranchised, specifically homeless and immigrant communities
- Host intergenerational spaces for community meals, performances, lectures that highlight spirituality, justice, environment
- Model environmental stewardship through a rebranded Possibility Re-use Shop, sustainable gardens and green space

People we serve:

- Adults and families seeking an open and affirming organized spiritual community
- Families seeking safe, affordable early childhood care
- Teens seeking to build life experiences through community service and spiritual growth
- Community organizations centered in justice seeking space to commune and engage
- People seeking to share their gently used items and those who want to purchase used items for affordable prices
- Burlington citizens who are seeking a welcoming space to meet other like-minded citizens without discrimination or judgement
- Homeless people who need a facility where they can quickly clean/freshen up and grab a quick bite to eat

Spokes concept serves to ensure an interconnectedness that is intentional and easy to navigate. Success looks like:

- Childcare: families discover a family-friendly service and attend.
- Teen shows up after school to collect supplies at the Poss Shop to prepare for home deliveries to new refugees.
- Poss-Shop customers can easily sign up for a community dinner.
- Community members who walk by on their way to shopping or restaurants - stop walk up to see upcoming programs or spend a moment reflecting in the sanctuary.
- FCC hosts a community lecture series on getting to know our refugee community.
- Homeless person stops by on a cold day for a quick shower and takeaway snack.

Reimagine campus layout to better reflect a visible/accessible open door with quick access to many things, to engage the street and actually bring all kinds of people in at various times of the day and week.

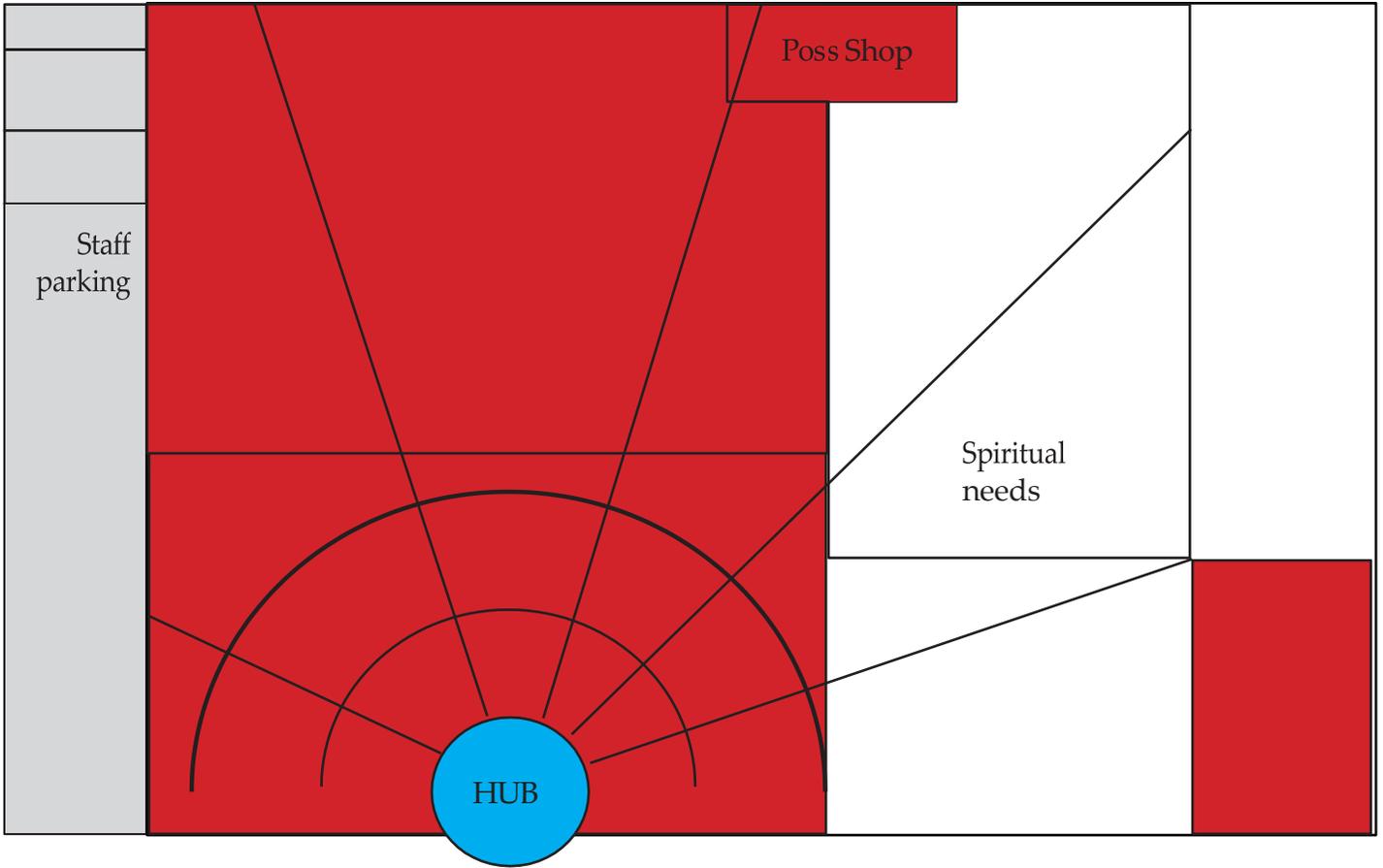
- Our current entrances are either grand and imposing (sanctuary) or tucked away from the street. Passers-by have no reason to believe that they belong if they are not already members. Change the impression so that when a person walks by they are *encouraged* to walk in and explore. Reimagine these spaces to better engage our community from the street.



Area to reimagine



Preserve



Focus on becoming outwardly focused and commit to radical hospitality.

- “cross-generational interest groups where older people meet younger people and have some younger people meet middle-aged folks...so that we know the population better.”
- “we take our young people and adults outside of Burlington and outside Vermont to do service and there’s a lot more we could be doing right here, or inviting other people to come in and work with us in this city.”
- “Use our venue to integrate with the community more. We do have to change to keep current, but don’t have to change our focus”

Partners:

City of Burlington Zoning - Architects - CEDO

VISION PROJECT TEAM & PROPOSAL

B. Daycare

Focus: Help for marginalized, financially challenged, refugees, immigrants, single moms, subsidized or free. Provided by FCCB funding. Convert land east of the Memorial Garden to a playground. Ground floor classrooms and kitchen space. Building space assessed for safety, adequate infrastructure, meeting all state guidelines. Will need trained staff and curriculum.

Preliminary Proposals that fall in this Vision Project include:

Proposal Title: Establish and actively operate a day care center at First Church to serve those in our community who can ill afford that service today to include immigrant or refugee populations.

It definitely would establish our commitment to outreach to the community around us.

It would involve an ongoing relationship with the children and their caregivers.

It would call for a significant hands-on commitment by the congregation that would involve considerable expense set up and manage.

Not just contracted out, it would involve active day to day engagement by members and employees hired to supplement member involvement.

It definitely looks upstream by providing a constructive environment for children and opportunity for parents to pursue employment/education or other positive development – to avoid downstream problems.

It makes better use of our church campus which is largely unoccupied most of the week.

It might even provide the collateral result of adding new members to our congregation.

But here are some questions about such a plan.

How aggressive a plan are we willing to undertake and support?

Do we have the necessary skills?

How much are we willing to spend?

How much risk are we ready to assume?

Proposal Title: Day Care

Focus: Investigate possibility of establishing, staffing, and maintaining a day care facility on First Church premises.

- What would success look like? Functioning day care center serving working parents with affordable day care.
- With whom might we partner?
College Street Church, YMCA

Proposal Title: Day Care at First Church

Focus: Outreach to families. I would like to establish childcare for all children from all races and creed. It would be a secular program with an emphasis on cooperation and listening to others.

Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* –

- How might this proposal apply? If it doesn't, that is fine. If it does, please connect the dots. To help underserved families.
- What would success look like?
Providing needed and affordable day care in Burlington
- With whom might we partner? (City, local, State?)
City, state and federal funds.

Proposal Title: Daycare at FCC

• **Focus:**

Attract daycare provider/owner to locate at the church, taking advantage of underutilized space during the week.

Outside, convert the space to the east of the Memorial Garden into a playground; inside, use (reconfigure if necessary) ground floor classrooms/kitchen space. Explore with JUMP the possibility of using gym space for indoor play on certain days.

- Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* - How might this proposal apply?
Additional daycare needed for working families in Burlington. Opportunity to welcome/open church to serve the broader community. Introduce church to young families and more diverse members of the community.
- What would success look like?
A fully licensed, insured, functioning daycare open 4-5 days per week within two years. The daycare would pay rent to the church.
- With whom might we partner?
Pick the brains of existing organizations (eg Sarah Holbrook, King Center, others) and/or determine whether they would be willing to work together to open a new affiliate operation. Reach out to child/family-oriented NFPs like Lund. More research would be needed to determine logical "partners".

Proposal Title: Child Care System Support

Focus: Complement existing providers and programs serving the childcare needs of low-income and at-risk families. Not intended to be a source of income for the church. There is a dire need for affordable and flexible childcare services in Burlington. Burlington YMCA accepts those receiving state subsidies and offers financial assistance, but its waitlist is closed because it has no openings for the 2022/23 school year. The Champlain Valley Head Start program has a waitlist and the only year-round provider in Burlington is the King Street Center.

Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* - How might this proposal apply?

Enhance downtown presence by making better use of the church building and its location, a major asset. Reaches out and engages with the community and various organizations supporting those in need. Provides endless service opportunities for church members including legal and business talents.

- What would success look like?

Provide multiple support services to expand childcare services. Address current barriers that are limiting the availability of childcare in Burlington.

Child Care at First Church - Consider a drop-in and/or part-time format to serve those that may only need a few hours a week. Consider a coop model to help with affordability and staffing.

Want-to-be Provider Assistance/Accompaniment - Assist potential providers with application and approval process, finding space, lease agreements, obtaining state financial assistance, loans, etc. Use First Church Child Care as an incubator for new providers.

Parent Assistance/Accompaniment - Assist parents with financial assistance application process.

- With whom might we partner? DCF, YMCA, King Street, CVOEO, Let's Grow Kids, COTS, Howard Center, Spectrum, other churches, AALV

Proposal Title: Early Childhood Education

Focus: Single Family Mothers

Questions 3 & 4: Reaching out to the underserved members of the community

What would success look like?

Economic Equity for women

Academic Equity for economically challenged children

With whom might we partner?

Let's Grow Kids, 19 Marble Ave., Suite 4, Burlington, VT 05401

VISION PROJECT TEAM & PROPOSAL

C. Building Projects and Renovations

Focus: Sanctuary renovations: accessible pulpit/choir areas; upgrade entrance for visual appeal/safety, replace front doors (consider glass). Renovate dining room, adjacent space to meet many needs, flexible use/seating, new wiring, streaming/projection capabilities, art/artwork. Upgrade security system. Music education space (storage: music, musical instruments; performance, educational/practice space, piano); homelessness needs, affordable housing (build structure over north parking lot/front of chapel); install parking kiosk/Park Mobile/EV(electric vehicle) charging station, renovate bathroom/showers under sanctuary. Establish daycare space, kitchen; ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) access to second floor, ADA access to Memorial Garden and front lawn. Reconfigure space to generate income; non-profit incubator/co-working space.

Preliminary Proposals that fall in this Vision Project include:

Proposal Title: New Signage - Welcoming Opportunities

Focus: To establish a more creative and inviting welcome to FCCB to passers by in the community. Advertise that we're who we think we are.

#3 & # 4: Building Renovation, Building use, reaching out, engaging community, outwardly focused, Radical Hospitality

What would success look like? Outside signage updated. People would get we are about. This could be a brief statement put on a permanent sign. Outside signage would have a welcoming message inviting people in. We could experiment with a quarterly open sanctuary time when the public would be invited in for a brief visit with friendly welcomers answering questions.

With whom might we partner? Giving tours, listening to music, video presentation.

Proposal Title: Building Reconfiguration to generate income

There are many comments regarding the building and its use and the need to reconfigure it. I propose that it be reconfigured in a manner that would generate income.

What would success look like? The building is reconfigured so that it is used more during the week. It is configured so that it generates enough to pay for maintenance, capital improvements, and, an employee to manage all the aspects of the building and property.

With whom might we partner? Local businesses as potential customers.

Proposal Title: Church sponsored space for Music

Focus: Music lessons, practice space for musicians, small concerts

Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* - How might this proposal apply? use of empty church space and encourage young musicians in the church and community at large

- What would success look like? Growth of music programs in Burlington
- With whom might we partner? City, local, other churches, music teachers

Proposal Title: Public Bathrooms, Laundry

Focus: Offer a friendly face to homeless and transient community with bathroom facilities. The area under the Chapel would be renovated to provide private showers and toilet facilities and a public Laundry. Volunteers would monitor the space which would be open a few times during the week. Could coincide with Poss Shop hours and or Jump hours. Cleaning would need to be done between uses under current Covid policies...

Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4*

Wider Building Use; Social Justice; Service reaching out, Building renovations for functional service, Relationships with other churches/organizations; Poss Shop? Church relevant for All. Cleanliness next to Godliness tenet implies that being clean makes a person feel good about themselves, feel presentable to the world, may offer the first step toward the path away from homelessness.

- What would success look like?

Short term - clean and welcoming place to get clean. Long Term - a client returning as a volunteer!

- With whom might we partner?

Poss Shop and or Jump Free Legal Clinic. Could partner with other churches/organizations for volunteers. Could partner with City for monitoring outside, e.g., Street Outreach Position. Offer connections to programs that teach self-sufficiency.

Proposal Title: Opening UP the building

Scope of work: Making modifications to allow the building to be more fully used by ourselves and the community. Change security system from door alarms to full camera coverage and electronic door controls to allow for multiple users and layers of access and logging of access. Add a payment kiosk for parking to allow for more revenue from parking and as a centralized way to control use of the parking areas and notify the public when the parking is for a designated use. We aren't going to tow on a regular basis if someone doesn't pay just accept their money when they choose to pay and make it easy to pay by using the Park Mobile app. Add a lift to allow ADA access to 2nd floor of Ed wind for Jump use. Create ADA access to the Memorial Garden and the front lawn. Modifying the sanctuary so that the pulpit is accessible and better suited to the choir or other groups of performers are elevated for better viewing.

Measures of successes: More bodies in the building and generating more revenue from the building to make the physical plant more self-sustaining. As building usage increases staffing will need to match the usage.

Community Partners: Local business, performers or artists that want to use our rooms, JUMP

Proposal Title: Sanctuary Entrance

Focus: Make our church more inviting to passersby and possible visitors by replacing the existing front doors with new doors and an efficient vestibule.

* **Redo the bathrooms** beneath the narthex of the Chapel, add showers and a laundry facility. Make it secure from the rest of the building and open it to the homeless population. Consult with Doug and Ann on this project. Consult with the City of Burlington and/or the Howard center to staff it and train volunteers. At the very minimum, redo the basement bathroom so they can be used.

I am aware that this project has already been brought to the attention of the leadership when Caroline Crawford was President - and it was decided that it was not necessary since the Methodist Church was already providing this service. This response was not acceptable to me. We have JUMP, Small Potatoes, and Possibility Shop clientele already in our building and homeless people already on our doorstep.

To open our doors for this service is a natural next step. Do we know how much longer the Methodist Church will still be an active congregation? Do we know when we might need to provide sanctuary to a family that may need these type of facilities? Questions to ponder.

Proposal Title: Front Door (Sanctuary)

Focus: Add more glass to our front door to be more open, inviting & welcoming to the community.... to be able to see what's going on inside and outside... to be less of a visual barrier... to make easier to operate and use.

Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4*

This is a feature of our historic building that has served well for 180 years, but will soon reach end of service, and require rebuild. We can use this opportunity to let the community beyond our doors know something of who we are and that they are welcome here, while making it easier for all to open the large doors safely by providing visibility in and out.

- What would success look like?

Design and installation of an historically appropriate rebuild. It would incorporate transparent glazing, easier operation, and increased safety that presents a welcoming and inviting experience for congregation, visitors, and community.

- With whom might we partner?

Congregation, staff, worship team, usher team, deacons, historic building consultant, designers, etc.

1. **Replace the front doors** to our building to reflect a more open and welcoming invitation to the public. Do so with lots of triple pane glass to allow for climate control. People should not have to wonder what goes on inside of our closed up building but know that this is an open and welcoming place that brings in the outside world as well as the light. Consult with Doug and Ann on this project.

Proposal Title: Support of our Worship Life

Focus: Sanctuary modifications to facilitate worship planning and provide varied worship experience.

Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* - How might this proposal apply?

- Worship is a wonderful part of our life together!! But there are ways/times when the physical fixed nature of the Sanctuary does not accommodate new ways and new ideas.

What would success look like?

- Modifications to the front of the Sanctuary to create more floor space at the main floor level would allow for: - different arrangements of music ensembles, piano, and choirs - more variety of movement in worship, perhaps liturgical and story-telling drama - more desirable to community performance groups

With whom might we partner?

- All staff, entities, groups, teams with role in planning and executing worship; lighting and media persons; performing arts community leaders

Proposal Title: Music Space

Focus: Making a permanent space for music at FCCB - music storage, music folder racks, piano, place to practice permanent places to store notices, instruments, rehearse, etc.

- Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4*

Music is an important factor in people coming to and staying at FCCB. There is a need for a single space rather than being scattered all around the church building.

- What would success look like?

A dedicated space large enough for rehearsals, to keep music, instruments, piano, etc.

- With whom might we partner?

FCCB - old Prudential - building and finance, any organization offering grants for such activities, musicians of FCCB and other interested parties

Proposal Title: Capital Fund

Focus: Establish and fund a long-term capital account to pay for major future repairs and maintenance of church buildings. Would cover infrequent major projects such as roof repair/replacement, exterior painting, window replacement, furnace replacement, etc.

Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4*

How might this proposal apply? I don't know

- What would success look like? Elimination of large, infrequent annual budget items for "unanticipated" building repair items. Annual maintenance budgets would then only cover recurring maintenance items such as cleaning, interior painting, etc.
- With whom might we partner? No one

Proposal Title: Housing at First Church

Focus: Put our land to use serving the community by providing space for construction of truly affordable housing. We could build over the north parking lot or the lawn in front of the Chapel. The idea is to not be selfish with the land that has been given to use but to share the resource with the most difficult to house population. Regular developers must purchase land and fend off neighbors to provide affordable housing. We could provide the land and support to get the permits quickly, cheaply and pass that savings on to future generations with development covenants that keep the housing affordable for all generations.

Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* - How might this proposal apply?

#3: Social/racial justice, more families, reaching out, building (land) use, PROVIDE OTHERS WHAT WE HAVE RECEIVED.

#4: Continue to identify unjust practices...Speak truth to power. Be activists. Enlist the support of leaders in local, regional and State institutions who recognize these injustices and can direct their influence to make substantive, positive changes, RADICAL HOSPITALITY.

- What would success look like?

20-30 units of primarily Affordable and some market rate to provide a mixed community. Partner with a non-profit developer. Provide a solution that meets the metrics of an organization like <http://metricsforhealthycommunities.org/>. Opportunities for members to serve the new community. (daycare? group dinners? spiritual needs? etc...)

- With whom might we partner?

EverNorth (Housing Vermont), Champlain Housing Trust, Lake Champlain Land Trust, COTS, etc.

2. Add solar panels to our roof where-ever it is most appropriate. We must, along with the rest of the world, address the climate crisis and do our part to help save the beautiful creation God has entrusted to us. Consult with Doug and Ann on this project.

VISION PROJECT TEAM & PROPOSAL

D. Contemporary Worship and Media

Focus: Attracting new, younger population, meeting wider worship needs. Renovating FCCB dining room and church space(s) - flexible seating, new wiring, streaming capabilities, modern projection, art/artwork on walls, variety of worship approaches, flexible use of space when not worshipping. **Focus:** Accessibility and expanded outreach. Flexible camera system (wide angle, tracking movement of speaker, etc.); streaming from different areas of the building; directional speaker system (high quality).

Preliminary Proposals that fall in this Vision Project include:

Proposal Title: Sunday of Mourning

Scope of work: Memorial Day 2023? Providing a chance to mourn all the losses of COVID, racism, eugenics, gun violence, suicide, etc. in the past few years. A chance to reflect on the missed weddings, graduations and hugs we have been doing without.

Community Partners: Vermont Conference, Hope Fund, Downtown churches

Proposal Title: Contemporary Music & Message Worship Service

Focus: Creating especially a contemporary musical service. With modern projection art, fun interactive feeling lighting, and casual theme. I imagine having lots of new music that highlights the talent in our Church and Burlington and also bringing in music from artists like Lauren Daigle as well as sound healing and meditative music.

- Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* - How might this proposal apply? Bringing in more youth, young families and helping to elevate our heart songs!

- What would success look like?

A weekly contemporary music worship service with a short message or prayer service. Possibly combined with a meal. I imagine us standing in the upstairs room with a big projection screen and lifting our hearts and dancing while singing and worshiping. I would love to work for the Church to bring this dream to reality in some capacity. I think springing from the connections that would bloom could be a lot of fun Biblical theatre and self-expression experiences. Also, possibly extra interest in playing musical instruments and learning to jam. I had a youth group experience like this, and it was transformative.

- With whom might we partner?

Other Churches in the area. Our Faith Development Department. Spotlight VT. The Generator Maker Space, Middle & High School Counselors and Teachers of Faith. Radio Stations. Higher Ground.

Proposal Title: Future Media Upgrades

Focus: Upgrades: 1) for more flexible camera system that can follow action around more of the room; 2) to allow streaming from different areas of building (eg: Chapel, Dining Rm, Conference Room and perhaps from Memorial Garden and entry area outside of Midway); 3) plan for and aspire to future growth of system capabilities (eg: directional speaker system where sound comes from where the action is instead of just the main front speaker that is high above the pulpit).

- Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* - How might this proposal apply? Reach people where they are... both in person and virtually; keep system tuned-up to cultural expectations of multi-media world

- What would success look like?

Flexibility, ease of use, responsive to new ways of worship, better capture full sense of worship experience.

- With whom might we partner?

staff, groups/teams supporting worship planning and etc.

Proposal Title: New Ways of Worship to Welcome New Members

Focus: The traditional 10 a.m. Sunday service has limited appeal to those who did not grow up in a mainline Protestant church, or who do not like formality, or who want to make a closer, more natural and informal connection to God and to community. College students and young adults especially may

have an aversion anything that implies a close-minded Christianity that excludes instead of includes. I propose that First Church explores several new ways of worship to welcome new members as well as those who might not know what they are longing for until it's presented to them--a Sunday afternoon or evening informal service, a "Church Without Walls" service on Church Street or in City Hall Park, a "Love Church"-style worship that focuses on informal connection in the natural world (Holy Hikes). It is essential that we broaden our worship offerings to bring new and more diverse members into our community. We should explore and try out several different styles of additional services to see what gains traction. We absolutely will fail with some of what we try, but we don't and won't know what will resonate until we try.

- Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* – How might this proposal apply?
This proposal will accomplish many of the goals set out in 3 & 4 including increasing diversity, widening building use, engaging youth, and reaching out. We have to be willing to try and fail because we WILL fail at our visioning work if we try nothing.

- What would success look like?
Bringing new and different people to FCC and having current members have new and welcome opportunities to explore their faith in different ways. If we launch a program and have more people attending in six months than we had at the beginning--success! If we don't, but we've learned more about us and the community--also success!

- With whom might we partner?
We could partner with some of the other UCC churches in New England who have tried alternate forms of worship to see what they've learned and borrow from their programming rather than start from scratch.

Proposal Title: Church Services for Homeless People

Focus: Present ourselves as folks with a vision, presented with caring and acceptance (with limits below) to homeless/street people who take shelter (or simply hang out) on our porch, along Cherry St. and Church St.

- Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* - How might this proposal apply?
Hot lunch once a month to start, in the dining room after our regular service.
Security necessary throughout building so people would not take advantage and stay on to shelter inside. Be aware of not putting anyone in danger and find that our church building becomes a place for drug use (essential place to guard would be restrooms).
TRAINING ESSENTIAL by knowledgeable practitioners to know how to effectively deal with situations that might arise.
- What would success look like? FCCB becomes a place where less-than-fortunate homeless people feel comfortable but know there are limits within our property.
- With whom might we partner? Engage the Howard Center person or people who has/have a good relationship with the named population to provide invaluable information.

Proposal Title: Broadening our worship options

Scope of work: To survey the congregation about what elements of the 8am worship and Sunday evening worship were essential elements which made them different. In what format could those service be created in a sustainable way. Focusing on lay lead gatherings or bring in other pastoral

resources. Different style musical offerings than 10am worship. Different locations than just in the building? Expanding AV system to allow for live remote access into the 10am service.

Measures of Success: More bodies in the building being spiritually fulfilled

Community Partners: College Street Congo, Vermont Conference

VISION PROJECT TEAM & PROPOSAL for E. Environmental Assessment

Focus: Safety, climate justice, infrastructure needs, solar panels. Assessment and remediation (if needed) for mold, lead and general air quality. Solar panels and assessment for reduction of carbon footprint.

Preliminary Proposals that fall in this Vision Project include:

Proposal Title: Climate Justice

Focus: Make changes to our practices and the land and facility we steward that do not contribute to the consumption of resources and climate warming, and that are forward thinking demonstrations of sustainability in the face of climate changes.

- Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* – How might this proposal apply?
Vision (3-5 yrs out): 1) We have begun to change our culture of choices and decision making to one where the health and future of the planet is the primary basis. 2) we acknowledge we are stewards of land that was not our descendants' to claim, but that we can strive in our time to make the best use of the facility, the land it sits upon, and the gifts of the congregation in ministry and service to city and regional communities and the disenfranchised at their edges while working to improve the stewardship of the earth in deed and by example.
 - What would success look like? 1) the church facility is generating at least as much electrical energy through reduced consumption and solar as it consumes; 2) we have reduced our use of natural gas through tightening thermal envelope, better monitoring and control of thermal systems serving our spaces, and changing our culture of use; 3) we have reduced our water usage through use of low-volume fixtures and plumbing system upgrades; 4) we are conscious of the environmental impacts of cradle-to-grave and supply-chain dynamics of the materials we need/use, and are working to be as responsible as possible in the choices we make;
 - With whom might we partner? – City/State/Local - All and beyond
- * **Add solar panels to our roof** wherever it is most appropriate. We must, along with the rest of the world, address the climate crisis and do our part to help save the beautiful creation God has entrusted to us. Consult with Doug and Ann on this project.

Proposal Title: Environmental Assessment of Building & Grounds

Focus: Having the building and grounds professionally assessed and if needed remediated and improved. Especially concerned about exposure in the building to mold, lead and air quality.

- Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* – How might this proposal apply?
Here is the church, here is the steeple, open the doors and...SEE ALL THE PEOPLE! Yay I love the idea of populating our Church with People! Children and families! Youth! College Students and Elders! Our Church is an incredible resource downtown and before we expand programs, and capacity-it seems wise to assess the safety of our facilities. When I worked at the church, I was pregnant and had just had a baby and I was having extreme allergic reactions after spending time there on Sundays. Which ultimately led to me tendering my resignation-for fear of my own safety. I have an autoimmune system that is extremely sensitive, and I shared with my direct supervisors (Ava & Lucy) but didn't want to alarm anyone. I have been in many situations where myself and others experience side effects years before others, due to environmental toxins. Now that there is so much more flexibility and hybrid work and worship styles it seems extra important to confirm the safety of the building for use. Especially for the staff who is in reproductive stages of development. Spaces including the Sanctuaries, Hilah office area behind main sanctuary, Pause Shop and offices.
- What would success look like?
Being able to test the air and environmental qualities of the entire premises and confirm safety or create a plan for remediation and improvements. Some may be as simple as high-grade air purifiers. Others may be more complex and take more time. I know we can adapt to whatever makes sense safety wise - because we have!
- With whom might we partner?
<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/blp> <https://www.healthvermont.gov/environment/home> Possibly: Let's Grow Kids, 7th Generation, COTS, other groups we are actively or wish to actively work with

Proposal Title: Capital Projects Endowment

Focus: Fund an FCC endowment for on-going capital projects. Replacement of boilers, elevators, windows, roofs, et al, are costly and can play havoc with annual operating budgets. By setting aside monies for anticipated capital needs over the next decade, we should be able to insulate somewhat the church from sudden but necessary and expensive projects that we know are bound to occur.

Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* –

- How might this proposal apply?
on-going functioning of the church
- What would success look like?
Fund an account with 100% of the anticipated capital costs over the next decade (15? yrs) as determined jointly by the buildings and grounds committee and the finance committee.
- With whom might we partner?
Judge this to be an internal matter

Proposal Title:

Building/grounds/infrastructure assessment for long-range planning & budgeting

Focus: Have a thorough assessment done of building/grounds/infrastructure needs, both maintenance and new work. This would include estimated timeframes when maintenance and other projects would need to be done as well as estimates of how much they would cost. This would allow *much* smoother planning and budgeting for all these items and would help us anticipate in advance what our capital costs will be (estimated) over a long planning horizon (suggest at least 15-20 years). This would complement the "punch list" spreadsheet the Building & Grounds Team has developed and would take it a lot further.

- Looking at responses from Vision Questions 3 & 4 - How might this proposal apply?

Question 3 responses with which this proposal connects:

- + Wider building use in general
- + renovations for functionality and service
- + renovations to the sanctuary
- + renovations for accessibility

Question 4 responses with which this proposal connects:

Expand/improve use of physical space (access) with goal of increased use for all...better understand city permitting, etc....

Work with architects/landscape dising to start to visualize possible transformations...low-cost testing of best ideas.

It is going to take a lot of money and greater creativity to make the whole building accessible.

Improved the outside appearance of the church.

Investment in our physical plant to preserve it.

Use our venue to integrate with the community more.

I think one of the most important things is continuing to be a safe space

I think what we need to do is focus on the building itself. I do understand that a majority of the services we want to do are outside the walls... but we still have to take care of the structure. Update spaces no longer used, converting space into places in the building that have accessibility for the handicapped or disabled people. We need to gain access to those spaces so we can hold events and services.

- What would success look like?

- + Well-maintained building; no deferred maintenance
- + Building/grounds/infrastructure that supports the programs/mission/outreach of our vision and does not delay or hinder implementation of those activities

VISION PROJECT TEAM & PROPOSAL for **F. Partnering w/Current Programs/Expansion**

Focus: Outreach. Year-round support VIA (membership in Vermont Interfaith Action), Vermont Conference UCC Hope Fund; a tithe for outreach (VT Racial Justice Alliance, OCWM (UCC – Our Church’s Wider Mission); new support for current, creative outreach; non-profit incubator in FCCB building; Capital Funds Endowment; JUMP – the Joint Urban Ministry Project; financial support for current tenants to purchase homes; social services position on/affiliated with the Burlington Police Department; financial restitution to: Abnaki, African-Americans; fund a street pastor; fund small repair and improvements in low income housing; Sunday of Mourning (for all losses COVID+) Memorial Day 2023.

Preliminary Proposals that fall in this Vision Project include:

Proposal Title: Small repair and improvement of housing

Focus: This proposal would make it possible for low income, disabled or elderly folks to have some small repairs or maintenance jobs made to their housing which could lead to improved comfort, self-esteem and safety. When possible, the renter or owner would be involved in the work (think Habitat). While completing the work we would be developing relationships with many people in the community. This might lead to identifying more needs which we might be able to help with by referring them to appropriate services.

- Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* - How might this proposal apply?
Reaching out- engaging the community, service, social justice, presence in the community

- What would success look like?

We would make a difference in people's lives. Perhaps some folks will gain skills and confidence to join the team or seek further training and eventually get hired by a contractor.

- With whom might we partner?

Landlords, Burlington Housing Commission, COTS, JUMP, Age Well

* **Consider some form of financial reparations** to the African American Community in our midst...perhaps by a substantial contribution to the New Alpha Church for their building fund; or to a housing fund for first time home owners from the African American Community.

* **How might we offer some form of financial reparations** to the Abenaki Community for the land that that our church sits on and the part we played, or did nothing to stop, the UVM sterilization of native women program, making sure that the monies go to the true Abenaki people for ways they define as useful for their community development.

Proposal Title: Wellness Clinic

Focus: An onsite Wellness Clinic (like the First Church Legal Clinic), to promote mental health and wellness strategies through advocacy, education, and counseling services. It would provide wellness and stress reduction techniques, mental health assessment, limited counseling, and assistance with determining options for continued wellness.

The Wellness Clinic would be provided on a regular basis to First Church members and its friends in a safe and supportive environment.

Such professionals will provide this work as Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselors, Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Medical Doctors, Psychotherapists, licensed Nurses, and Social Workers.

Strategies:

- Recruit First Church members and friends with the professional expertise to staff the Wellness Clinic.
- Proactively seek those in the community with the professional expertise to staff the Wellness Clinic.
- Explore partnerships with non-profits such as Mental Health America. Mental Health America (MHA)'s work is driven by its commitment to promote mental health as a critical part of overall

wellness, including prevention services for all; early identification and intervention for those at risk; integrated care, services, and supports for those who need them; with recovery as the goal.

- Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4*

Reaching Out

Presence in the Community

Continuity in service

Social, racial, and ecological justice

Relevant, bold, and visionary

Using the building for service and outreach

Serving the community

Building on the work already done to improve lives with better connectivity and more unity.

A focus on what is happening in Burlington

Outreach and advocacy

- What would success look like?

A popular Wellness Clinic offering innovative strategies and services to promote mental health and wellness through advocacy, education, and counseling services to everyone in the community.

- With whom might we partner?

- The City of Burlington, Vt

- Professional support and expertise to the Wellness Clinic will be provided by Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselors, Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Psychotherapists, Medical Doctors, Social Workers, and Licensed Nurses trained in the health and wellness field.

- Chaplains, ordained Ministers, and clergy of all faiths, with mental health and wellness training, may also serve the Wellness Clinic in this capacity.

- First Church members and friends.

Proposal Title:

Transformation and remediation of Substance Abuse Systems in Burlington, Vt.

Focus: Transform alcohol and opioid addiction treatment and management systems/structures into a smoothly working, inclusive, all-encompassing, efficient, and empowering experience through which the road to recovery can be realized.

Examine the interaction and collaboration between social services, judicial branches, insurance providers, medical and education sectors to improve treatment access and drug & alcohol rehabilitation.

Address additional issues and challenges including discrimination, labor shortages, low pay, insufficient training, lack of transportation and housing as well as the absence of political will to make changes to improve outcomes.

The targeted picture:

Begin with a focus on the alcohol treatment systems in Burlington, Vt.

Begin the conversation with the DayOne Program at the UVM Medical Center and learn how we can help those with a history of substance abuse.

Strategies:

Find where the treatment network is failing.

Find barriers which prevent those in recovery from treatment access.

Find where there is a breakdown in timely access, coordination, and communication among the various disciplines offering treatment.

Consult community leaders regarding the breakdown in delivery of services. Is there a disintegration of efficient, speedy, access to treatment? Where is the injustice in the system? What effect does lack of money, transportation, employment, and health have on these resources? Explore why the Justice system levies fees for probation meetings and assumes transportation is available to clients.

Establish First Church volunteers willing to serve various institutions or organizations in their efforts to provide treatment; this would include providing drivers to appointments.

Utilize existing resources such SAMHSA's National Helpline <https://www.samhsa.gov> as a template to locate breakdowns in the coordination of service providers. SAMHSA.gov, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administrations

Provide Education- Describe how alcohol and drug addiction affect the whole family. Explains how substance abuse treatment works.

Cultivate ombudsman and other social workers who can help alcoholics navigate the system.

Learn from key people in each of these disciplines, including recovering addicts.

- Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* - How might this proposal apply?

Reaching Out

Presence in the Community

Continuity in service

Social, racial and ecological justice

Relevant, bold and visionary

Using the building for service and outreach

Serving the community

Building on the work already done to improve lives with better connectivity and more unity.

A focus on what is happening in Burlington Vt.

Outreach and advocacy

- What would success look like?

A transformed alcohol and opioid addiction treatment and management system which works seamlessly, is inclusive, all-encompassing, efficient, and empowers those with substance abuse challenges to continue recovering from addiction.

- With whom might we partner?

The City of Burlington Vt, its community leaders, local officials and services, Medical Center of VT, Medical Community and Mental Health professionals such a Psychiatrists, Rehab Centers such as Valley Vista, The Serenity House, Rutland Hospital, Turning Point, AA, AL- Anon, Brattleboro Retreat, Insurance providers, State Legislature and Department of Corrections and self-help groups. Engage with local courts, crisis centers, and local lawyers.

Proposal Title: Fund Social service position at Burlington Police Dept

Focus: Provide emotional support and listening skills to help the police deal with calls so guns are not used.

- Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* – How might this proposal apply?
Outreach to our neighbors.
- What would success look like? Less gun response by police.
- With whom might we partner? City, state federal monies

Proposal Title: Peacemaking

Focus: Encourage, facilitate voter registration and voting.

Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* – How might this proposal apply?
Voting and civic engagement are the tools we have as individuals that can effect change in society. We can work to support and ensure access to both by the under-represented populations in our community.

- What would success look like?
A Voter Registration drive. Rides to/from public meetings and the polls. Distribution of accurate information.
- With whom might we partner?
Community group leaders, city & state officials, other church congregations, new American and refugee resettlement groups, etc.

Proposal Title: Help for homeless of Burlington

Focus: Praying with our feet

Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* – How might this proposal apply?

Praying with our feet

- What would success look like?
Homeless people would be known and helped by us.
- With whom might we partner?
Social workers, homeless shelters and food support for the homeless.

Proposal Title: Affiliate with - join - support - Vermont Interfaith Action

Focus: That we - the congregation of First Congregational Church UCC of Burlington Vermont - will actively affiliate with the work and mission of Vermont Interfaith Action - supporting VIA financially (budgeted giving) - and with our very selves. VIA will move fully into being a year-round/full mission of First Church. Why? So that our congregation will effectively pursue vital social justice initiatives. With our increased focus on social justice – and in response to the congregation’s lifting up of social justice goals in both the cottage meetings and in the book studies - I believe that VIA is an excellent vehicle - the partner - for organizing for change, interfaith efforts and to activate a process to identify social justice goals within our congregation and community. I have been participating actively in VIA for nearly two years now and am frankly wowed by the expertise of the leadership and the engagement

of even the newest volunteer. I was on the original organizing group of VIA @20 years ago. VIA's growing pains are long gone now. Vermont Interfaith Action is a source of excellent organizing and training/education for organizing. I consider this proposal as vital for the future of First Church as a voice for social justice in Burlington - in Chittenden County - in Vermont and beyond.

- Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* - How might this proposal apply?
With our increased focus on social justice – and in response to the congregation's lifting up of social justice goals in both the cottage meetings and in the book studies - I believe that VIA is an excellent vehicle - the partner - for organizing for change, interfaith efforts and to activate a process to identify social justice goals within our congregation and community.

- What would success look like?
Active engagement in the congregation in many arenas seeking social justice for all.

- With whom might we partner?
Vermont Interfaith Action - other area faith communities

Proposal Title: Supporting VT Churches of Tomorrow - The HOPE Fund

Focus: The health, stability, and future of not only the First Congregational Church of Burlington but all UCC churches in Vermont are vital to building and sustaining vibrant and spiritual communities throughout the state. Given the good fortune of First Church in having more resources than many other local churches, it seems right to share and invest some of those resources with other congregations. In November 2021, the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ created a visionary initiative called the HOPE Fund. The goal of the HOPE Fund is to raise \$200,000 to support to fund new and creative ways for local churches to grow, thrive, and be relevant in their communities. As stated by the Vermont Conference: "The HOPE Fund will encourage innovation, societal impact and new ministry in our midst. As we near the end of this pandemic and look to the future of a post-pandemic world, our churches need help to imagine new ways to be the church in this new landscape. We live in the most unchurched state in the country, and we look to connect with people who don't go to church with the Good News of our faith. We have had experience with doing ministry in new ways during this Pandemic, so let us come together to invest in that!" A number of pilot projects are underway, funded by early dollars raised. For instance: "In West Dover, a new Disc Golf ministry bears witness to God's abundance and love of poor working-class and other communities by providing a free venue for exercise, fun and education in towns overly invested in the interests of affluent vacationers to the detriment of local working-class and poor residents, especially children." In Brattleboro, "Being outdoors enabled Jesus to be accessible and visible. Centre Church's vision is to foster a highly accessible and visible outdoor ministry to the community on its front lawn. The new ministry includes, but is not limited to worship services, musical concerts, dance performances, film showings, and labyrinth walks." This proposal aims to support these and other Vermont churches by contributing a total of \$25,000 to the HOPE Fund over three years: \$10,000 in both Years 1 and 2, and \$5,000 in Year 3. By sharing and investing First Church funds in the HOPE Fund, we are investing in innovation and in our worship and service partners throughout the state.

- Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* - How might this proposal apply?
Question 3 asks about what our vision for First Church is in 3-5 years. Our answers spoke to new ways of reaching out, increasing diversity, using our building, developing relevant programming, and growing membership and relationships including with other churches. This proposal enlarges our thinking from just what a vision of what First Church can look like to a vision of what other UCC

churches in Vermont can look like as well. Other churches too wish to reach out, connect with the community, nurture new members and families, be relevant, and use their buildings and resources to offer opportunities for others. When other churches grow and thrive, First Church does as well. We can learn from the models, stories, and experiences of other congregations in order to create new opportunities for First Church to worship and serve in our own community.

- What would success look like?

Success for this proposal includes: the HOPE Fund, with the contributions of First Church, meeting its goal of raising \$200,000; the creation of innovative models to "do church," gain members, and contribute to communities that other churches including First Church can use and adapt; and increased membership in Vermont UCC churches including First Church by making church and faith formation accessible and interesting to people who are seekers but are either unaware of First Church or do not see themselves in our current model of church.

- With whom might we partner?

The Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ and all Vermont UCC churches.

Proposal Title: Non-profit incubator/accelerator

Focus: Identify and provide the key resources needed by local non-profits and establish a collaborative cyclical cadence to allocate/distribute funding, office/meeting space, networking, partnerships, and the relationships needed to fill new needs and support expansion of current effective programs. Specifically consider staffing and potential opportunities to fund the lost Howard Center coordinator position and a city/police social services coordinator position.

- Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* – How might this proposal apply?

This directly applies to reaching out and specific initiatives mentioned, but it more specifically addresses needs raised in the community group meeting.

- What would success look like?

All existing providers and new sources of funding and resources as they become available.

Benchmark Generator, Hula and Intervale Center agricultural incubators for best practices that could translate to the non-profit sector.

- With whom might we partner?

JUMP, Howard Center, State, Federal funding groups?

Proposal Title: JUMP Expansion

Focus: Partner with JUMP to expand their reach and impact. This could mean adding services, additional locations, hours/days of operation, etc.

Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* – How might this proposal apply?

The most frequent answer to #3 was "Reaching Out" and that is what JUMP does - it engages the community in need outside of or church and offers whatever help it can.

What would success look like? Decrease in the levels of poverty, homelessness, and hunger in Burlington and the surrounding area.

- With whom might we partner? JUMP, Howard Center, State, Federal funding groups?

Proposal Title: Small repair and improvement of housing

Focus: This proposal would make it possible for low income, disabled or elderly folks to have some small repairs or maintenance jobs made to their housing which could lead to improved comfort, self-esteem and safety. When possible, the renter or owner would be involved in the work (think Habitat). While completing the work we would be developing relationships with many people in the community. This might lead to identifying more needs which we might be able to help with by referring them to appropriate services.

Looking at responses from *Vision Questions 3 & 4* - How might this proposal apply?
Reaching out- engaging the community, service, social justice, presence in the community

- What would success look like?

We would make a difference in people's lives. Perhaps some folks will gain skills and confidence to join the team or seek further training and eventually get hired by a contractor.

- With whom might we partner?

Landlords, Burlington Housing Commission, COTS, JUMP, Age Well

Proposal Title: UCC Collaboration To work in greater collaboration and partnership with the College Street Congregational Church, with an eye toward possible consolidation in the next decade or two.

- Pew National Studies about the role of religion in our culture shows consistent decline in mainline churches. While we are fortunate to have a superb preacher in Elissa who will keep us going and even growing for a while, it will make little sense to have two Congregational Churches a few blocks apart, given the demographics of each congregation as the years go by. I am heartened by the more efforts of our congregations recently as I feel only a richness can come from such efforts.
- Think of staffing, building maintenance, and program potential of one "City Congregational Church that my grandchildren may attend. Lots of emotion, history and even territorial obstacles must be considered sensitively, but this is a vital visioning notion that deserves our attention.
- The following statistics from the 2021 Pew Research Center Survey indicates that religiously unaffiliated adults (nones) rose 29% while Christianity dropped to 63% (40% protestant, 21% Catholic and 2% other). Of the 40% protestant, nearly 26% of the 40% are evangelicals and 14% are mainline protestants, Our church is considered "mainline" and these recent statistics only strengthen proposal #1.

Proposal Title: Reparations: African American Community Consider some form of financial reparations to the African American Community in our midst...perhaps by a substantial contribution to the New Alpha Church for their building fund; or to a housing fund for first time home-owners from the African American Community.

Proposal Title: Reparations: Abenaki Community How might we offer some form of financial reparations to the Abenaki Community for the land that that our church sits on and the part we played, or did nothing to stop, the UVM sterilization of native women program, making sure that the monies go to the true Abenaki people for ways they define as useful for their community development.

Proposal Title: Immigrant Family Sponsorship

Focus: Sponsor-Support-Mentor (Christian?) immigrant families in the Burlington area, helping in whatever ways possible to adjust to life in the US, and introduce them to First Church, encouraging membership in our congregation.

Looking at responses from Vision Questions 3 & 4 - How might this proposal apply?
I don't know

What would success look like?
Successful adjustment to their new home and incorporation into normal everyday life in Vermont for adults and children.

With whom might we partner?
Vermont Refugee Resettlement

Proposal Title: A Tithe for Outreach

Focus: Funding the FCCB Outreach to enable programs in the church and wider community that support the work of God's hands

Question 3#'s number one response was reaching out. The seven bullet points beneath all connect to the Mission of our Outreach Team. Yet, the Outreach Team budget currently could not support any of these suggestions.

What would success look like?
We could pursue new creative avenues of outreach in our community
We could pay our dues in support of VIA initiatives for racial justice.
We could increase our support for Racial Justice Alliance
We could extend greater support to OCWM
We could support VTUCC Hope Fund
& so much more!

With whom might we partner? VTUCC, VIA, Racial Justice Alliance, Vt Cares, etc.

Proposal Title: Abenaki Connection

Focus: Reach out to our Swanton area Abenaki neighbors to offer our congregation and property as resources for projects of their choice and leadership.

#3 & 4: Use of property and resources. A 'public' outreach focus on social justice

What would success look like? Ongoing mutual relationship with Abenaki community partnership for social justice with focus on Indigenous peoples of Northwestern VT

With whom might we partner? Swanton area Abenaki Tribal Council and leadership, City of Burlington, Diversity and Inclusion, the faith communities in our area

Proposal Title: Help tenants buy the property they live in

Focus: Create homeowners out of underserved renters

- Questions #3 & #4: Affordable Housing
- What would success look like?
More renters could own their apartment building.

Read article by New York Times writer: [Ronda Kaysen - A landlord 'underestimated' his tenants. Now they could own the building](#) - May 6, 2022

- The article is linked here: https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/a-landlord-underestimated-his-tenants-now-they-could-own-the-building/?utm_source=email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=article_inset_1.1
- Partners: State, Federal, Burlington, City housing (see linked article by Ronda Kaysen above).