



Invitation to be part of planning for our church's future

November 2022

As a church, we are embarking on an intentional process to discern how God is calling us at this time and in this place. Over the next few months, we will think creatively together about our unique purpose, our relationship to the community, our partnerships, our building needs, and how and whether our building serves our purpose, both now and in the future.

Who will lead this process?

After an extensive search we are engaging [Sarai Rice](#), congregational consultant, to guide us through this process. Sarai (pronounced like “Sarah”) brings deep experience helping congregations of many faith traditions envision the particular work to which God is calling them.

We are assembling a Planning Team composed of congregation members and staff to work alongside Sarai to engage our whole congregation in a discernment process to:

- clarify the unique purpose of United Parish
- recommend a clear course of action regarding our building and how it supports our purpose

The focus of the process will be on engaging as many congregation members and stakeholders as possible, trusting that, as we remember and dream together, our church will experience the breath of God's Spirit and God's call.

What will the Planning Team do?

The Planning Team will work with our planning consultant to:

- create a **discernment process** for our whole congregation
- identify **key questions** (e.g. questions about times our congregation has been called to take risks, ways in which our building both creates and constrains opportunities for ministry, what kinds of amazing things we see this congregation accomplishing in ten years, etc.)
- engage members and stakeholders in **transformative conversations** about our purpose, our building, and what God is calling us to do next
- participate in and facilitate **one-on-one interviews, small group meetings, large group meetings**, etc.
- create a **communication plan** to keep the congregation informed about the process

When will this work happen?

We anticipate this work will begin in November and be completed by Easter (April 9th).

How much time are you asking members of the Planning Team to commit?

The Planning Team will help to shape the process and timeline for this work, and will determine together how often to meet. At a minimum, we expect Planning Team members will participate in:

- a kick-off planning retreat (December)
- regular team meetings (ongoing through March)
- one-on-one interviews, small and large group meetings with congregation members and stakeholders (ongoing through March)
- a retreat to synthesize collected data and create recommendations for consideration by the congregation (March)

I'm interested in being part of the Planning Team! What are the next steps?

Great! Please fill out this [short nomination form](#) by November 20th letting us know why you are interested and what your availability is over the next few months. You can also use this form to suggest someone else for this team.



Please note that we are aiming for a team that represents the diversity of our congregation (with a mix of ages, backgrounds, length of time at UP, perspectives, etc.).

Nominations will be reviewed by our pastors and Council officers, who will propose a list of members for the Planning Team for Council's approval.

We may not be able to include everyone who is interested on the Planning Team, but EVERYONE will have an opportunity to participate in the planning process.

I want to be part of the planning process, but I don't have time to be part of the Planning Team. Are there other ways I can get involved?

YES!! Our hope is that **everyone** in our congregation will participate in this important work. There will be many opportunities to engage in conversations and provide input.

We ask for your prayers that we may truly listen for God and to each other as we discern the future of our church.

We welcome your questions, comments and ideas! Feel free to reach out to us:

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