



Volume 2: Appendices

**Report of the Congregational Identity Task Force
of the Ministerial Transition Team**

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**Rob Dainow, Leslie Hill, Marg Fletcher,
Naomi Taylor, and John Boyle**

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Appendix A: Methodology

Planning

Planning for the ministerial transition phase about Rethinking Our Identity began in Feb. 2021 with a brainstorming session in the Ministerial Transition Team (MTT). This session came up with initial ideas about what kind of approach will we use, and what will we ask the congregation, and how will we engage the UCV community. These ideas formed the foundation for this investigation.

Our approach

We adopted Appreciative Inquiry (AI), an approach to organizational change that has been used successfully with hundreds of organizations worldwide, including many religious organizations. It is based on the simple idea that organizations move in the direction of what they ask questions about. It focuses on moments of exceptional pride and performance and uses these to create a future that nurtures and supports even more pride and performance. We modelled our investigation on the work of Mark Lau Branson, who describes in considerable detail how he used AI to lead a transition at the First Presbyterian Church of Altadena, California that was surprisingly similar to our situation at UCV. (See *Memories, Hopes and Conversations: Appreciative Inquiry and Congregational Change*, The Alban Institute, 2004.)

What we asked

We decided to ask UCV congregants nine ‘thought-provoking questions’ (TPQs) about their best experiences and memories at UCV. These questions were based very closely on those Mark Lau Branson used in the transition process at the First Presbyterian Church of Altadena. These TPQs are shown in Table 1 on the next page. The responses of Vancouver Unitarians to these TPQs is the basis for the bulk of the analysis in this investigation.

Engaging the UCV community and gathering data

We sent a letter to all UCV members on March 10, 2021, to introduce the Identity phase as “the most important step we need to complete in our ministerial transition before we begin our search for a new settled minister.” We stated in that letter that “We want to engage every person in this congregation in a conversation about these [thought-provoking] questions so that our future vision and identity will reflect, as much as possible, the expressed wishes of everyone.” We used all the communications channels we were aware of to invite congregants to participate in this Rethinking Our Identity phase of our ministerial transition: Direct mailing to all members, updates in the monthly Bulletins, announcements in weekly Orders of service and weekly E-Bulletins, website postings, Board announcements in Sunday services, testimonials from workshop participants, an informational video in several Sunday services, and direct appeals to groups and teams at UCV to participate together in an ROI Workshop.

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Table 1. Thought-Provoking Questions – Rethinking Our Identity – Vancouver Unitarians

TPQ	Question
TPQ1	Reflecting on your entire experience at UCV, remember a time when you felt most engaged, alive and motivated. Who was involved? What did you do? How did it feel? What happened?
TPQ2	What are the healthiest, most life-giving aspects of the relationships among people at UCV? What would you say has been most valuable about your friendships in this community? Have certain groups been valuable to you? What would you say is most important about how we relate to each other? Give some examples of how we live together at our best.
TPQ3	What are the most valuable aspects of our congregation's worship? In your Sunday services and other worship experiences at UCV, what contributes the most to making your worship alive and meaningful? When worship is at its best, how does it shape us? What shapes your Unitarian faith?
TPQ4	What do you believe are the most important and meaningful elements of our congregation's engagement with the local community, the nation, and the world? Describe one or more times when UCV was most faithful to Unitarian values and principles in how we relate to, work in, and act as witness in our community.
TPQ5	What are the most important things our Unitarian community has contributed to your life? Who or what made a difference?
TPQ6	What are the most valuable ways you contribute to our congregation – your personality, your perspectives, your skills, your activities?
TPQ7	What do you think is the most important, life-giving characteristic of our UCV congregation? When we are at our best? What is the single most important value or characteristic that makes Unitarians or UCV unique?
TPQ8	Make three wishes for the future of our Vancouver Unitarian congregation.
TPQ9	Is there anything else you would like to add?

We designed the Rethinking Our Identity (ROI) Workshop as the principal method to bring congregants together to reflect on and share their responses to the TPQs. They also discussed in these workshops any themes that came up in their discussions and created some “possibility statements” about how who and what we would like to be, but that we have not yet achieved. These are hoped-for aspirational statements that can help guide us towards the future UCV we want to become. The first pilot ROI Workshop was on Mar. 3, 2021 and the last was on Oct. 13. Five members facilitated 18 workshops. Ninety-six (96) congregants participated (including 11 youth) in these workshops. The data we gathered at these ROI Workshops included the individual TPQs as well as the themes and possibility statements each group identified. Our next step was to invite the over 200 members who did not participate in an ROI workshop to complete the ROI Questionnaire that we sent to each of them on Oct. 14, 2021. Nine (9) replied by Oct. 30. We sent a follow-up letter on Oct. 30 to all those who had not replied to the initial mailing. Twenty-four (24) replied.

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Four members chose to send us their own thoughts on our identity in an email submission, which we welcomed and included in our analysis.

Table 2 summarizes the congregational responses in this investigation.

Table 2. Congregational Participation in ROI Investigation

ROI Workshops (Mar. 3 – Oct. 13)	96
ROI Questionnaire (Oct. 4 – Nov. 8)	33
Email input	4
Total	133

We also included in our analysis relevant data that two other members collected during our investigation period:

1. Jamie Homeniuk shared in her homily in the Jan. 30 service (“Celebrating Imbolc”) the feedback she received from a few groups at UCV that she asked to share some intentions that they’d like to set for our community. We took note of these and included them in our analysis.
2. Kiersten Moore (Director of Lifespan Faith Development) asked congregants in the Mar. 6 service (“Treehouse Rules”) to answer these 3 questions in person, in the online chat, or after the service:
 - a. What do you love about (or hope for) this congregation?
 - b. What do you need from this community to bring your whole self to this space?
 - c. What is needed in order to remain or return to right relationship when we screw up?She received 44 responses and shared them with the Congregational Identity Team so that we could include them in our analysis.

Table 3 summarizes the sources of data for the ROI analysis.

Table 3. ROI Analysis – Data Sources

ROI Workshops (Mar. 3 – Oct. 13, 2021) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- TPQs- Themes identified- Possibility statements
ROI Questionnaire (Oct. 4 – Nov. 8, 2021) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- TPQs
Email input (Mar. 3 – Nov. 8, 2021) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- open-ended input
Jamie Homeniuk homily (Jan. 30, 2022) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- UCV groups’ intentions/hopes
Kiersten Moore – 3 questions (Mar. 6, 2022) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- what do you love about UCV- what do you need to bring your whole self- what do you need to be in right relationship

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Analysis

The bulk of our data for this investigation came from congregant responses to the TPQs, and the bulk of that data (over 70%) came from ROI workshop participants. This was, therefore, the primary focus of our analysis.

We started our analysis by looking at each TPQ in turn. The (initially three then four) CIT members looked at all the responses to each TPQ and identified the themes we each discerned in the responses. We shared and discussed our suggested themes to reach an agreement on the themes we would use to carry out our analysis for that TPQ. One of us then reviewed all the responses to that TPQ and wrote up a summary, which we shared and discussed in the team. We proceeded this way through each of the TPQs. We identified 22 main themes in the first seven TPQs.

Table 4 on the next page summarizes the themes we agreed on and then analyzed for each TPQ.

The next step in our analysis was to look for overlaps and interconnections among the main themes we identified. We grouped these main themes into six overarching themes and considered how we could use these as the basis for structuring our report presentation. Table 5 shows how the TPQ main themes were reorganizing into the seven overarching themes.

We then extended our analysis to include the other data we had gathered beyond the TPQs:

- Theme statements developed by participants at the ROI Workshops.
- Possibility statements developed by participants at the ROI Workshops.
- Email input from individual members.
- “What do you love about (or hope for) this congregation?” (Kiersten Moore).
- UCV groups’ intentions/hopes (Jamie Homeniuk).

After reviewing and considering all our data, we refined the seven overarching themes in Table 5 into these eight topic sections in our final report:

1. Community
2. Principles and Shared Values
3. Minister
4. Services and Ceremonies
5. Personal and Spiritual Growth
6. Walking the Talk
7. How We Contribute
8. Other Perspectives

We are satisfied that this investigation of UCV’s identity has collected and analyzed input from a very significant proportion of the Vancouver Unitarians community and that our analysis has been sufficiently rigorous that we are confident in our findings. Our biggest hope is that this work will help UCV to chart its course into the future, starting with a successful search in 2022-23 for a new settled minister.

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Table 4. Main Themes for Each TPQ

TPQ	TPQ Themes
TPQ1 (remember a time when you felt most engaged, alive and motivated)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Services & ceremonies 2. Minister 3. Appreciation for "unifying values" of UUism 4. Connection, community, belonging, "found my home" 5. Religious Exploration (RE)
TPQ2 (healthiest, most life-giving aspects of the relationships at UCV)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respectful Communications 2. Relationships 3. Activity and shared values
TPQ3 (most valuable aspects of worship; what shapes your Unitarian faith)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Music 2. Sermons 3. Services elements
TPQ4 (engagement with the local community, the nation and the world)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social action that various people and groups undertake 2. Ideas and Values which support outreach
TPQ5 (most important things UCV has contributed to your life)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Activities they engage in as part of this community 2. Spirituality or personal growth, and how 3. UCV has provided a community, a 'home', a safe, welcoming space
TPQ6 (most valuable ways you contribute to our congregation)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Activities they engage in as part of this community 2. Skills they share and the perspectives they offer 3. Personality characteristic (friendly, enthusiastic, curious)
TPQ7 (most important, life-giving characteristic of UCV; what makes Unitarians / UCV unique)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appreciation for the gifts they receive from this community 2. Shared values and principles 3. Our social action and activism
TPQ8 (three wishes for the future of UCV)	<p>10 main themes (identified by at least 10% of respondents):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Membership 2. Internal desires 3. External desires 4. New Minister 5. Worship Services 6. Sanctuary use 7. Problem solving/communication 8. Religious Education/Exploration (RE) 9. Site development 10. Financial

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TPQ	TPQ Themes
TPQ9 (anything else you would like to add)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Minister2. Services and Ceremonies3. Music4. Shared Values (glance towards spirituality)5. Community/home/safe welcoming space/gratitude6. Respectful Communications7. Membership8. Sanctuary/Campus Use9. RE10. Kudos for CIT

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Table 5. TPQ Main Themes and Overarching Themes

Main Themes from TPQ Analysis	Overarching Themes
Minister	MINISTRY
Sermons	
Services and ceremonies	
Services elements	
Spirituality or personal growth	
Music	
Religious exploration	
Appreciation for "unifying values" of UUism	SHARED VALUES
Shared values and principles (glance toward spirituality)	
Ideas and values which support outreach	
Engagement through shared values	ENGAGEMENT
Engagement through activity	
Activities	
Social action that various people and groups undertake	
Social activism	
Connection, community belonging, "found my home"	COMMUNITY
Community	
UCV as community / home / safe welcome space	
Respectful communications	
Quality of people	
Quality of relationships	
Minister	ASPIRATIONS
Internal desires	
External desires	
New minister	
Worship services	
Sanctuary/campus use	
Problem solving/ communication/ interacting - improvements	
Religious exploration	
Site redevelopment	
Financial stability/sustainability	
Renaming	
Activities	HOW WE CONTRIBUTE
Skills	
Perspectives	
Personality	

Appendix B:

Questionnaire Theme Summary Analyses

B1: Thought-Provoking Question #1

Reflecting on your entire experience at UCV, remember a time when you felt most engaged, alive and motivated. Who was involved? What did you do? How did it feel? What happened?

These are the 5 main themes that arose from our analysis of responses to TPQ1:

1. Services & ceremonies
2. Minister
3. Appreciation for "unifying values" of UUism
4. Connection, community, belonging, "found my home"
5. Religious Exploration (RE)

1. Summary of Services and Ceremonies theme

Almost one-third of respondents mentioned services and worship as a source of their most engaged, alive, and motivated times at UCV. Respondents identified a rich variety of service and worship experiences. Many also found their active participation in services planning and presentations was very meaningful. The choir has a special place in the services and worship experiences of many members and non-members, especially for those who are or have been choir members.

The respondents who mentioned services and worship as important and meaningful shared a rich variety of experiences, including:

- "Christmas pageants and other special ceremonies and special musical events."
- "The candlelight service."
- "I felt most moved with beautiful and meaningful ceremonies, especially funerals and weddings."
- "First time... at UCV was for our wedding."
- "Pagan rituals (change of seasons, 4 directions), water ceremony, fire ceremony."
- "Group meditation (prior to Sunday services) and its Buddhist style facilitator."
- "Meditation room – amazement that a "church" had a room for Buddhist meditation."
- "Prayer circle at the watch house anti-pipeline event where Steven Epperson and indigenous representatives spoke."
- "Felt very motivated when I attended my first service... I wept with gratitude as it was a very moving and meaningful service and one that affirmed, I had come home to the right place!"
- "Truly memorable service was [when] our UCV community had invited a dozen faith leaders from other religious/spiritual traditions and each contributed a core teaching or insight that highlighted in turn, the best aspirations and commonalities of diverse spiritual traditions."

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- “Appreciated how much the UCV services involved children and their pageants and also talk of our ancestors.”
- “Theatre games lead by adults from UCV! Like the [Meeting Our Ancestors practice] with Vivian [Davidson] and [Diane Brown].”
- “Helping with the livestreaming.”
- “Post service gatherings/coffee hour”
- “No pulpit per se, no steps up to it, be able to see the beauty of the trees while at worship, loved the sanctuary space”
- “Find sanctity in the sanctuary.”

Respondents mentioned at least 7 times how participating in planning and/or presenting a service was very meaningful for them. Some of these mentions include:

- “Felt engaged and alive connecting with and acting as liaison with guest speakers through [Worship] services committee”
- “I wrote a play (long skit really) for a service which recreated various important people from our past, acted out by various members of the UCV congregation. I learned a lot about our history, had fun, and engaged with many UCV members. The UCV history came alive for me as I wrote the play; I could “hear” the voices of past ministers. The play / skit went over very well. Steven loved it. I felt good for my contributions.”
- “Giving the sermon was outside my comfort zone, took lots of work and preparation.”
- “Being a lay chaplain. Being able to be a part of people's lives at important transition times like weddings and funerals ... feeling like there was something she could do to help... Being involved with people in meaningful ways.”
- “Felt most engaged, alive, and motivated as a lay chaplain. It’s a sacred and creative experience... It’s also a way to share the Unitarian faith with others.”

The importance of the choir and music in services was noted by at least 11 respondents (8 of whom are current or past choir members). One comment sums up its importance: “UCV has allowed her to realize how much of her spirituality is bound up in music.”

Services and worship are multi-faceted at UCV. They have an important place in our identity and contribute important meaning to many members and non-members.

2. Summary of Minister theme

Almost one-third of respondents mentioned the minister as a source of their most engaged, alive, and motivated times at UCV. Five different ministers were identified by respondents (Steven Epperson, Phillip Hewett, Lara Cowtan, Sydney Morris, and Andy Backus). Steven Epperson was named most often (24 mentions) and Phillip Hewett second most often (7 mentions).

The minister’s sermons and other communications were mentioned most often (24 mentions). Here is some of what respondents appreciated:

- “Listening to Steven Epperson's challenging homilies, I was inspired by the content of his sermon, but also his style of speaking... I usually left with a personal commitment to be better and more active in improving my life and my world.”

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- “Impressed with sermon quality since age 14, hearing Phillip.”
- “Enjoyed the diversity of the sermons from Lara and Steven - admired Steven’s free wheeling sermons on whatever he felt like talking about or had just read about, e.g., beavers, forests, trees... the sermons were so thought provoking,”
- “Sometimes his sermons, combined with the choir and the sanctuary, took worship to another level of beauty, connection, justice and appreciation of life.”
- “Steven Epperson was... very inspiring and engaging and [I] looked forward to attending UCV. It felt empowering. He spoke to issues that I had not heard mentioned from a pulpit and made me feel that I had found a welcoming place to be. Soon after this, I became a member of UCV.”
- “Sermons that don’t mention god – shocked!... Able to learn something instead of being in resistance about what I was hearing.”
- “Reverend Steven Epperson would... integrate his homily/ his sermon and the service into the current events of that time and place”.
- “Loved hearing Phillip Hewett speak.”

Special ceremonies are another area where the minister had significant impact on some respondents. These include weddings and memorials (“I felt most appreciative and proud of my church when we got married by Phillip Hewett”), and special services like the ancestor services Steven Epperson presented annually, and Christmas pageants taught me to see the celebration in a non-Christian, affirmative and progressive light.”.

Ministers also provided meaningful support for members by:

- Helping them ‘find their way’ in the congregation (“Sydney Morris helped her to really engage, connect and be involved.”);
- Greeting members before each Sunday service (“I also felt especially welcome when Steven greeted us each Sunday and made a fuss over the kids. They LOVED to come see him, which made participating in UCV much easier for me.”);
- Care and Concern support (One person commented that their most impactful experience at UCV was a memorial service that Steven led. His interactions with this person and a Care and Concern Committee person’s visits were both beautiful examples of ministry beyond the sanctuary. That experience led to their continued presence at UCV.);
- Personal counselling and guidance and support (“Spoke with Steven and felt really heard and respected by him.” “The minister set me up with a grief counsellor and others.”);
- Teaching and inspiring (e.g., UU in a day/New UU workshops, Write your own Creed, Madness Radio Group).

It is very clear from these responses that the minister has a very significant impact on congregants’ engagement in this congregation and they provide some of members’ most engaged, alive, and motivated times at UCV.

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3. Summary of Appreciation for "unifying values" of UUism theme

Twenty-eight out of 120 respondents indicated that UCV values, community outreach, social justice and 'walking the talk' were what drew them into the congregation and inspired their most engaged moments. Sometimes this awareness came during the New U sessions, or through listening to the minister, and sometimes through action and involvement with a specific group, such as Refugees or Salmon Action group. In each case, the trigger was UCV values.

"When he met the Environment team, he felt immediately at home. He's been a long-time environmental activist so the fit was right. He appreciates a group who can take action seriously, themselves less so. He enjoyed the First Nation fundraisers, analyzing UCV's carbon footprint and the work on fish farms"

"Fundraiser for wild salmon (Feb. 2018) - David Suzuki spoke • Raise funds for worthy causes • Everyone involved, worked together with synergy • Hope/determination/mutual respect • Get to know others and see strength in action • Worthy causes!"

"It was the salmon fundraising event. We provided the venue and First Nations did the fundraising. We had been following the work of the First Nations re fish farms and learning from them and from Alex Morton's work."

XXX remembers "marching against the Iraq war in 2003 and feeling part of a visible community that stands up for what it believes in."

XXX joined the UCV Refugee Committee. From past experience she was able to offer help and felt very engaged. She felt a commonality with people on the Refugee Committee – a similar wish for justice. My other experience was joining the environmental team, participating in rallies, and doing a rotation at the tree providing support for the tree sitters. It felt good to do something concrete to support the fight against TMX.

- "Enthralled by the 500 years, from reformation to present, where so many people were persecuted"
- Unitarians focused on people and the common good, and being a threat to the status quo
- Fired idealism and courage
- Joined UCV based on its history and principles
- Personal connections, creative energy, generative, exciting [committee work]: felt ground-breaking, nourishing, dynamic, collaborative, stimulating, challenging. Everyone was very thoughtful and took it seriously, respectful discussions and disagreements: collaborative. Felt like a sacred task, big responsibility.

'Most satisfying experience working with others on Enviro Ctee, Social Justice Ctee, and Madcaps (now defunct), either planning participation in protests, sending letters, fundraising or organizing gatherings'

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‘When part of the Social Justice Committee. Was drawn to the people and the causes but thought the committee should be more involved in hands on service in the community, discussing issues less.’

‘My most engaging time was following my induction into the Congregation -- Oct to Dec 2019. I realised here was a group of people, who, by and large, thought and cared about fairness and others. And they gave evidence of acting upon these thoughts.’

‘When I first learned about UU values and our congregation and realized I had never been in spaces where we spoke about things in ways that resonated for me’

‘Very committed to the Seven Principles’

4. Summary of Connection, community, belonging theme

Forty-three respondents (out of 120?) indicated that their most engaged moments came when they were involved in activities with other people, whether these were committees, the choir, men’s groups, lunch making, protests etc. Men’s groups had several mentions. The emphasis in these replies was on personal connection. In three cases the people overlapped into appreciating UCV values and social justice.

‘In one word, “Connection”

‘One day stands out for me. I was participating in a Compassionate Communication Circle before a Sunday Service and felt a strong sense of connection with others in the group, a deeply felt connection. Afterward, I walked out into our courtyard where people were arriving and felt that same deep connection with others, a joy in my heart at seeing them that brought on tears of happiness.’

‘Actively engaged in many important, worthwhile activities, with people I like and respect and like working with’

‘Gardening, Lunch group, Feeling of connection, Sense of community, Belonging’

‘She says UCV has been everything to her. She found people who thought as she does, cared about where the world is going, reflected her own values and respected children. Along the way she joined the choir and has found many friends there. She says the church, the people she’s met and the choir have kept her going/alive.

‘First men’s gathering. Men being honest, vulnerable, thoughtful, showing how to be meaningful in the world ‘

5. Summary of Religious Exploration (RE) theme

33 participants (2 of whom were non-members), mentioned Religious Exploration / Learning as a most engaged, alive or motivating experience and provided 34 examples. Of these, 12

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mentioned CRE (7 child, 5 youth) experiences. Most of the CRE examples came from teachers in that program.

Obviously, an important indicator of the effects of CRE might also be gleaned by surveying the children involved but this is an adult survey. A notable quote related to participation in the youth program was: “I always liked to say it was at UCV that we all learned about sex, drugs and rock and roll!”

The remaining responses (17) were related to adult learning experiences which could be subdivided into 5 ARE, 7 New U, 6 under Social Justice and 4 “others”. After completing a 6 week course on creating one’s personal creed, one participant was surprised by the results among the group and said she came to believe that RE is a critical component of UCV programming.

B2: Thought-Provoking Question #2

What are the healthiest, most life-giving aspects of the relationships among people at UCV? What would you say has been most valuable about your friendships in this community? Have certain groups been valuable to you? What would you say is most important about how we relate to each other? Give some examples of how we live together at our best.

These are the 4 main themes that arose from our analysis of responses to Q2.

1. Respectful Communications
2. Relationships
3. Activity and shared values
4. Engagement through shared values

1. Respectful Communications

The quality of respect, including non-judgementalism, was identified in 18 respondents (~15%). Some additional people also mentioned respect, but it was not the main focus of that part of their answer. Here are some of the ways respondents expressed this appreciation:

- “People are respectful of one another and curious, but not judgemental.”
- “A common feature of these groups is respect, our ideas are valued, and there is an attempt at good communication.”
- “Respect and compassion for each other in committee work whether in worship or mundane tasks.”
- “The best aspect of the relationships among people at UCV is when we are really listening to others in a non-judgemental way and are accepting that just because their perspective is different from ours doesn’t mean they are wrong and we have to convince them to think differently.”
- “The covenant group I belong to. In group (and beyond): active listening, questioning, caring, and respect.”

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- “The freedom to be ourselves with our beliefs, not to be judged or put into boxes. I feel cared about and accepted.”

2. Relationships

“We have good and healthy relationships in our congregation.”

Almost half of the respondents who answered Q2 mentioned the qualities of the people in the congregation and the quality of their relationships at UCV.

Qualities of the people in the congregation

More than one in five of the respondents who answered Q2 talked about the qualities of the people in the congregation. They spoke about “many wonderful people here”, noting that “people were kind and friendly”, and “accepting”, “sincere, emotionally honest, and eager to connect.” “The people [I relate to at UCV] seem to take on each other quite seriously, they pay attention, get involved, care; they are open hearted.” “It seems to be a given that people drawn to UCV are good, open minded, and interesting people!” UCV is described as “a place to go to where I know I will encounter like-minded people”, “wonderful, well-meaning, nice, hard-working people. Nice to be connected to them.” One person noted that we “committed to this church in part because of the outstanding people we found here ... [including] great senior role models that we admired.” Another (younger) person stated that “It’s really hard to be mean here, and everyone is wonderful.”

Many respondents commented that this congregation is “full of really interesting people” who are fascinating, thoughtful, and intelligent, with diverse backgrounds and skills. “Nice to be in a community of people who are accomplished in so many different areas.” There is a wide range of people to choose from at UCV, “a pretty vibrant bunch”, with “very well seasoned ideas that fly around”, and “wonderful generosity about sharing – ideas, food, festivities.” “I’ve enjoyed getting to know people of all ages and experiences, so anything that puts me in touch with the kind of people I would not normally meet is good.” “Everybody is interesting. It’s like being at a really good party where everyone has something cool to say.”

Quality of how we connect (with each other and in community)

Almost one-third of the respondents who answered Q2 talked about the qualities of their relationships at UCV. Friendships, and the bases for these friendships, were the most common theme:

- “the feeling of a shared foundation on which to build, shared values and priorities”
- “a genuine display of friendship. It is characterized by sincere interest and involvement in the world around us”
- “most important relationships ... within small groups ... that have worked for a common purpose - friendships and support developed”
- “I treasured all of my UCV friendships ... the free inter generational interaction was a revelation”

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- “the most valuable part of the friendships that I have made at UCV are the long time relationships ... with people that I believe are trustworthy”

Those who did not identify friendships per se also spoke about similar qualities of acceptance, support, engagement, and community in their relationships at UCV

- “safe place for conversations; feeling included; similar interests; long term commitments with committee members”
- “can learn from each other as well as be supported and inspired”
- “sense of belonging on the whole ... it is more of a family ... kindness and being there for each other”
- “the community aspect – the sense that you always have the church at your back - it feels like unconditional support.”
- “found cooperation, respect, kindness”
- “relationship between kids and adults – only place where I’ve felt completely free of judgement from others, and unconditional acceptance of parents”
- “highly value working together with others on common purposes”
- “I really enjoyed interacting with others on the Committee ... we laughed a lot!”
- “felt supported when she had a young family, then later as a couple, and now ... as she faces life on her own”
- “life-giving aspect to UCV are ... relationships ... feels accepted and understood, more so than elsewhere.”

Several people noted specific groups that have been the source of their most important relationships at UCV:

- “the choir is wanting to make connections, to be supportive, and is wanting the best for each other”
- “my UCV men’s group meetings ... are without fail life-affirming, supportive, and the fellowship sustains me.”
- “women’s group – for longevity (we have been meeting for years) - allows us to respect each other in a deep way, sharing difficulties, humour, acknowledging we have different concepts of our lives; playing together”

This statement sums it all up nicely:

“I feel like my relationships are helping me become a better version of me.”

Finally, a few people noted that they did not find it easy to make friends and establish relationships at UCV, especially when they first started attending.

3. Engagement through Activity

Engagement through activities was mentioned by 45 respondents to this question. Nineteen mentioned thoughts such as: “People are willing to get things done even if they have different opinions”. There is “a matrix of abilities, diverse skills and an openness to sharing”. There were

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66 mentions of 34 specific activities that were meaningful to respondents. Some examples included:

- Messy church and potluck dinners were wonderful ways to connect.
- Gardening, B & G and picking strawberries together were ways to be useful but also to get to know others with similar interests.
- People involved in the environment team and refugee committee were also clear about how meaningful it was to learn and work together with each other and with the wider community involved in such service.

4. Engagement through shared values

Twenty-one respondents mentioned shared values as important in their relationships at UCV. Three quotes from respondents which illustrate this belief are:

- “We relate to each other charitably even when we disagree because we share bigger goals and Unitarian values.”
- “The most valuable aspects of (my UCV) friendships were continuity, shared values and community outreach.”
- “The best way to relate to others is rallying around common values and passions”.

B3: Thought-Provoking Question #3

What are the most valuable aspects of our congregation's worship? In your Sunday services and other worship experiences at UCV, what contributes the most to making your worship alive and meaningful? When worship is at its best, how does it shape us? What shapes your Unitarian faith?

These 3 primary themes were identified among the responses to Question 3:

1. Music
2. Sermons
3. Services elements which included the organizational flow of services, the variety of "specialty services", individual components of services such as greetings, candle lighting, meditation, rituals, story time and the involvement of children and youth, the sanctuary and outside views, the coffee hour.

Of note before expanding on these themes is the final sub-question under Question 3: what shapes your Unitarian faith? The majority of respondents spoke about services and so the implication is that those are the significant "shapers" of their UU faith. There were a few who spoke to this question by listing such things as outreach work, learning, the principles and our vision as shapers of their Unitarian faith. It was clear in many of the responses under Questions 1 and 2 that a wide variety of experiences and qualities within the congregation could be said to have contributed to the "faith" of many people.

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1. Theme of music

‘Music’ included choir singing, piano playing (Elliott Dainow and Harold Brown), congregational singing and guest musicians.

Out of 120 respondents, 61 put music either first on their list of valuable aspects, or further down the list but with emphasis. Of the 61, 22 were current or former choir members and 6 were non-members of UCV.

‘The music in the service is often uplifting and brings joy into my life.’

‘Like the way the music and other elements are integrated. I especially liked it when the music started– 10 minutes before the service.’

‘For me, the music served to enhance the listening to the words.’

‘The music, when the choir sang it left me feeling a sense the mystery. ‘

‘Music, especially choir, opens her heart.’

‘Music, the choir, Harold Brown and Elliott Dainow, as well as the guests who have come in to play have been wonderful.’

‘Music, it’s huge because of what it does on so many levels: the singing, the choir, the music directors, the invited guests, all these experiences do what music does, at times transports people, brings them into sacred space, brings them together, a big part of the worship services. ‘

2. Theme of sermons

Slightly more than 50% of the people who responded to this question spoke positively about the importance of sermons and homilies in their faith and worship experiences. Steven Epperson’s sermons were mentioned most often (in part because he is the most recent and long-serving minister; he is also the only UCV minister over 50% of current congregants have known); Philip Hewett, Reverend Lara Cowtan, and visiting presenters were also highlighted by some respondents.

At least seven (7) people stated quite directly in their responses to this question that sermons are at the centre of their worship:

- “The most valuable aspect of the worship service is the sermon message.”
- “The most important part of the congregation’s worship are the sermons.”
- “The sermons were invaluable to me.”
- “The thoughtful sermons are the most important aspect of worship.”
- “For me the most valuable part of worship is a good sermon.”
- “The most valuable aspects to me are the sermons / homilies often given by outsiders -- they oblige me to think outside my normal range of subjects.”

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- “The message in the sermons is critical to keeping me coming to services.”

Several people spoke about how sermons impacted them – with inspiration, life lessons, what is important in life, challenges, insights into current issues, motivation to action or personal change, and, “sometimes they just ‘hit a note’.” One person appreciated “thought provoking sermons that stimulate, integrate our principles into worship, and help shape our everyday life.” A sermon has most impact when it “has a theme that resonates through the service.” At least three (3) people expressed appreciation for the post-service sermon discussions.

The most often-mentioned characteristics of sermons were “stimulating and thought provoking”: being “intellectually challenged”, hearing “intellectually challenging new discoveries, especially something that’s new and never been brought to me before”, and “the stimulation of thinking that ... allowed me to go deeper into my own process.” Some also noted that they most appreciated “thoughtful sermons that touch both intellect and heart.”

Several respondents spoke about the important role of the Sanctuary space as an important part of their faith observance, from simple statements like the “Sanctuary is beautiful” to more evocative descriptions like “the sanctuary ... conveys peace and a real meditative space”, “being together in the Sanctuary - a very special place”, and “the sanctuary space itself housed my soul – I love that space.” One person offered this more all-encompassing statement: “What makes the worship alive and meaning is being in the Sanctuary in person and feeling part of that whole ... being able to look out from the Sanctuary at the arbutus trees.” This person sums it up nicely: “Sitting in the Sanctuary, listening to music, Elliott at the piano – these things brought me here and keep me here.”

3. Theme of services elements

83 respondents made one or more comments about the value of services and their elements under the discussion of worship and faith development. (Comments that were made strictly about sermons or about music were not considered under this theme).

Some general comments about what makes the "best services" include:

- top marks if they are positive, inspiring, stimulating and connecting (7) One respondent said “I am pleased if there is one moment in any service in which I can “drop deeper”, feel personally touched.
- those that engage head and heart, intellect and feelings (5). "My measure of a great service is that I've laughed and cried and gained new insight into some issue".
- Many have enjoyed the wide diversity of services: the inclusion of different faiths, lay and guest speakers (including some of our committees such as refugee, partner church, the environment team), ancestors' services, seasonal or ritual based services ("I like how we celebrate everything and I appreciate rituals that help me feel grounded"), children and mixed ages pageants "seeing the children (and youth) create is like watching a village being created on the stage".
- from the best (services), "I come away challenged (others say more open-minded), no platitudes or repetitions. We've been asked to think deeper, challenge assumptions and

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take action (stay resilient)" (7). "I think it's really important we share our pulpit with people from outside of UCV who are doing important social justice work".

Many respondents value the way services are structured (10), the familiar pattern of elements and the presence of a theme binding them together. "What's inside the structure can be mind-blowing". This respondent observes the tech support, rituals, and emerging content in each service. She "trusts the process for the congregation as a whole".

Some valued regular rituals are:

- the chalice lighting and the lighting of candles for cares and concerns (12). Many have appreciated hearing the reasons for these candles since services have been online and recognizing that they include people well beyond our membership.
- just being in the sanctuary with others (9), seeing nature beyond our windows, appreciating art on the walls and other forms of art utilized during the service
- the stillness during meditation (7)
- the way people are greeted by the minister and the greeters
- the time for greeting one another early in the service when in person. "I love watching peoples' faces as they find each other, the increase of the noise in the sanctuary, watching when someone new is being greeted for the first time and seems to relax into being acknowledged".
- acting as a unit if singing the children out or holding hands and singing Carry the Flame

Some respondents mentioned how important just the commitment to attend on a weekly basis can be. Some miss in person services, feeling a part of the whole, a few have felt that online services have also been intimate, have had fewer distractions and have had some innovations such as including music between segments of the sermon or homily.

Also offered was: "I appreciate the wisdom of other congregants, friends and enemies. I added 'enemies' as those are often the people from whom I learn the most. Understanding and respecting a diverse opinion allows me to make a connection with them. If we can make a connection and have a measure of trust, we are more likely to make the world a better place".

Three respondents noted that we never know what may be learned, that sometimes we are led in unanticipated directions ... they love the surprises!

B4: Thought-Provoking Question #4

What do you believe are the most important and meaningful elements of our congregation's engagement with the local community, the nation and the world? Describe one or more times when UCV was most faithful to Unitarian values and principles in how we relate to, work in, and act as witness in our community.

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Tally:

106 members provided responses to Q4

9 non-members provided responses to Q4

0 RE (Youth) provided responses to Q4

115 Rs total

Two main themes were identified among the responses to Question #4 as the most important and meaningful elements of our congregation's engagement and our faithfulness to Unitarian values and principles:

1. Social action that various people and groups undertake
2. Ideas and Values which support outreach

1. Social action that various people and groups undertake

Respondents told us overwhelmingly that the most important and meaningful elements of our congregation's engagement with the local community, the nation and the world are the social actions of Vancouver Unitarian individuals and groups. Ninety (90) of 115 responses to this question (78%) noted this. Most often mentioned were supporting refugees (38 mentions; 42% of social action responses), environmental action (36 mentions; 40% of social action responses) – plus wild salmon action (7 mentions), and social justice events and actions (25 mentions; 28% of social action responses). Eighteen (18) people noted the importance of marches, rallies, protests and arrests as important and meaningful elements of our engagement in the outside community.

Respondents also mentioned many other social actions as important and meaningful elements of UCV's engagement outside our congregation. These are listed here to show the wide range of social actions at UCV and their broad base of support in the congregation (numbers in parentheses indicate number of mentions if more than one):

- supporting first Nations and indigenous rights (8)
- organizing and putting on all candidates' meetings (8)
- support for affordable housing (including letter writing sessions organized by Steven Epperson) (8)
- actions in the Downtown East Side (DTES) (6)
- UCV's Outreach Opportunities Fund (6)
- making UCV space available to support social justice action (including providing safe housing for refugees) (5)
- support for Vietnam draft dodgers (5)
- food banks (5)
- Oak Street Farmers' Market (4)
- LGBTQ support (4)
- Unitarian Service Committee – now Seed Change (3)
- Partner Church activities (3)
- civil rights activism (3)
- anti-racism action (2)
- United Nations support (2)

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- act as witness (2)
- UCV action evenings (2)
- support for striking hotel workers
- engagement with other Unitarian congregations
- intergenerational dinners
- Watch House prayer services.

2. Ideas and Values which support outreach

Forty-four (44) respondents mentioned ideas and values which support outreach.

Half of these respondents (22) noted that members bring to the world the individual and personal transformation they have found through Unitarianism, putting their beliefs, values and principles into action, 'walking the talk', focusing on those people and situations which are helped rather than seeking recognition (except for Unitarianism).

- they tend to find meaning in sharing values and beliefs such as progressive thinking, embodiment of racial dignity and equality for everyone, openness to efforts that promote climate enhancement and efforts to improve the lives of people who are suffering from hunger, joblessness and lack of education, i.e., concern and support for justice for all people and the environment.
- "I love what drives the people next to me is concern for justice in our nation and safe guidance for our planet".

Other respondents focused on our work with other people and organizations in the community. Three members noted that something that sets UCV apart is its direct community participation and collaboration with other social justice organizations, "that's part of what makes us us", and that we need more of that. Another member thought that we think we are better at this than we actually are, that many churches do good works out in the community. It may be an aspiration of many in our congregation! It was also noted that our campus lends itself to the offering of space for community meetings and activities and that this is supported by us being non-judgemental, welcoming everyone, having a sense of curiosity and openness when being active in the community.

- 3 members either mentioned that Unitarians tend to be relatively privileged or that they should use their "status, wealth and influence" to advocate for change as it is important to be supportive of "those less privileged whether marginalized groups due to orientation, race, political beliefs etc" and to "lobby toward making the world a better place".
- another member hopes "that the congregation tries to stay informed in non-judgmental ways, that we are able to look at and examine issues in a somewhat balanced and non-righteous manner".
- one of the most important elements of our engagement that was mentioned by one member: "when we embrace people who are other and learn from them". As an example, she described a time Steven was arranging a memorial service for a South Asian man, was able to embrace his community and allow his family to shape the service.

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- one member said that it is important for UCV members to get the trust of local Indigenous people (and another to learn from their wisdom) so that we can ultimately work together.
- one member mentioned having "appreciated the way some responded calmly by encouraging convergence and respecting differences of opinion" during our congregation's 2021 process of considering the adoption of the 8th Principle within UCV and the CUC.

4 respondents emphasized that environmental activism is imperative. 2 stated that it is important to take risks in working on crucial issues such as the environment or political protest. One member stated that we generally have a liberal religious and political orientation and that "UCV should never lose sight of that".

At least 3 members mentioned that it is important that living our principles happens within our congregation (rather than focusing on "internal debates") as well as in our outreach work. They urge us to continue our respect for diversity and democracy as well as building community.

A final interesting observation from one member was that the use of many forms of art within our space could encourage us to embrace a wider world.

B5: Thought-Provoking Question #5

What are the most important things our Unitarian community has contributed to your life? Who or what made a difference?

Tally:

107 members provided responses to Q5
9 non-members provided responses to Q5
1 RE (Youth) provided responses to Q5
117 Rs total

The responses to this question fell into 3 groupings, or themes, with some overlap. The most important things UCV has contributed to members' lives include activities they choose to engage in, their spirituality or personal growth, and how UCV has provided a community, a 'home', and a safe, welcoming space.

1. Activities

Forty-three percent (43%) of the 117 persons who provided responses to this question identified one or more activities as "the most important things our Unitarian community has contributed to your life." There was a wide range of activities, often tied into or expressions of UCV as a community (e.g., "Environment team Friday evening gatherings have helped enormously just getting through Covid along with the choir continuing on Thursday nights by zoom"; "The care and concern committee has reached out to me at times."). Many identified UCV as a place for

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Spiritual growth (e.g., “It wasn’t until she did the [Build Your Own Theology] classes with Steven that she felt she could open a conversation about spirituality again”).

Respondents identified many different activities, some more than others:

- Sunday services (4 mentions), special services by a minister (4 mentions), and sermons (Steven Epperson was named in most of these 6 mentions). These responses reinforce similar responses from other questions that show the central importance of the minister and their services and sermons – here as (one of) the most important things our Unitarian community has contributed to their lives.
- Music was mentioned 13 times – more than any other activity. Comments referred mostly but not always to singing in the choir (25% of the workshop participants were choir members).
- Four people named the Environment team, 4 named the Religious Exploration programs, and 3 named Care and Concern among their most important contributions from this community.
- The many other activities mentioned included lay chaplaincy and the Chaplaincy Committee (2 mentions), covenant groups (2), Fry Creek Wilderness Camp (2), women’s group (2), refugee table and Refugee Committee, Book Club, Oak Street Farmers’ Market, and one-time or annual events.

The spirit of community and the spiritual growth that contribute to members’ lives are closely bound up in the activities they choose to engage in.

2. Personal Growth and Spirituality

53 participants mentioned spirituality or personal growth aspects in their lives as the most important things they had received or were receiving from being a part of UCV

1. An over-arching observation that was expressed by 7 participants was that they received intellectual, social and spiritual stimulation in a place that respects freedom of thought.

- One non-member observed that he can believe what he wants and be respected for it
- another noted that it was possible to be spiritual and practical at the same time, to have non-dogmatic engagement in the world
- another opinion offered was that Steven Epperson embodied faith, spirituality and activism.

2. 31 participants mentioned learning and being guided by the Unitarian principles as well as other aspects of personal growth. A parent stated that it was important for their family to gather with people who have similar values and principles but have different lived experiences.

- In various ways 11 participants stated that the principles and the community are guides on how to live and inform their service work. One person said that "the values are large enough to affirm mine and flexible enough to attract people of diverse backgrounds".
- From another: "the principles spoke to me from the start, especially the first and last ... the idea of inherent worth took some time for me to understand as it differed so much from the idea of original sin which is what I was raised in".

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- 11 people observed that there were opportunities for personal growth and learning, for example, finding new ways of thinking. Eg:
 - UCV had helped them move away from judgement to acceptance of different points of view.
 - They had felt safe enough to discover a new personal identity and to find love.
 - "thinking about how we speak about things and how things are done"
 - "made me more open minded and open hearted"
- 4 people appreciated having found a strong statement of values (in a place which allows that search) which, for one, helped her to stretch and expand, or find, her capabilities.
- Another saw UCV as "a steady force to think out my life"

3. 15 people mentioned spiritual benefits they received from being part of UCV. 8 of those found that UCV gave them a spiritual connection or foundation. They did not feel alone in their views, they found grounding in purpose and increased possibilities.

- classes were mentioned as well as services that allowed exploration of various religious faiths (2 mentioned discovering paganism). Another mentioned having appreciated being able to talk about spirituality in classes led by Steven E.
- 2 participants mentioned the beautiful ceremonies and services and that there had been a stability in some of our rituals through 4 ministers' time with us.
- "lay chaplaincy work enhanced my sense of spirituality in the world" She gave the example of spirituality that was created by participants in weddings that included no reference to any established traditions.
- Finally, UCV was described by 3 people, and exemplified in this quotation, as "a haven from pain and discord in the world ... it reinforces my faith in people". Another said that UCV "gives grounding and respite during times of transition or problems".

3. UCV as Community / Home / Safe Welcoming Space

A total of 110 members and 9 non-members replied to this question. 43 (36%) referred to UCV as a community they valued, a source of friends and connection, a home that mattered and/or a safe, welcoming space suggesting a strong heart connection. 14 people (11.76%) mentioned how important it was to their families and particularly their children. In terms of a heart connection, three respondents fell in love here and another was married here, which apparently formed a strong bond.

- This member loves the UCV community, its values, and its campus. For her it is a haven from the pain and discord in the world.
- Church is like home base. Have always gone back to the church for grounding and respite when facing a major transition or problem.
- The church provided a home for their children during their teenage years
- A sense of belonging
- I love feeling of community, I never feel 'left out' or alone in the world. Wonderful people in the congregation, and I feel very happy to be included
- Being there, having a place to go for me and my family - kids and wife. Gives us all a sense of belonging. A club I want to be a member of.

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- I think that the biggest difference UCV has made is that it has given me a spiritual home again after leaving another church. UCV is the best fit I could have found.

B6: Thought-Provoking Question #6

What are the most valuable ways you contribute to our congregation – your personality, your perspectives, your skills, your activities?

Tally

124 names in all respondents table (UCV Youth missing)

10 no response

114 responses

Ninety percent (90%) of respondents described the ways they contribute to UCV with the **activities** they engage in as part of this community. The **skills** they share and the **perspectives** they offer is how just over 40% said they contribute. The third most frequently mentioned way in which people said they contribute – cited by one-third of respondents – was by dint of some **personality** characteristic (friendly, enthusiastic, curious).

Activities

Involvement in activities specific or general, current or previously, was recorded by 103 of the respondents, reflective of a frequently heard saying at UCV “There is a lot that goes on here”.

61 activities relate to the Sunday sermons/sanctuary including presenting the homily, tech/sound, worship services, flowers (18), music (piano, singing (not choir) and choir) (20), formal and informal greeters including coffee servers (15), art (6) and Zoom coffee hour hosts (2). Informal greetings included “sits next to someone in sanctuary” and “freely offers hugs”.

59 activities relate to UCV organization including Board of Trustees (14), Task Forces (7), B&G (6), Canvass Committee (6), Search Committees (3), MTT (2), Newsletter/Bulletin (2), Nominating Committee (1), COM (1), HR Committee (1), Finance Committee (1), UCV Website (1), administrative and polity work (1), UCV archives (1), Library (3), New U workshops (1) and Care and Concern (2), gardening (6)

25 activities relate to outreach including Environment (7), Social Justice (6), Refugees (3), Family Community Meals (2), CUC (2), Partner Church (2), OOF Committee (2) and Koerner Committee (1). Social justice activities mentioned included All Candidates Meetings, rallies, marches, Reconciliation table, letter writing, forums.

18 activities involve children’s/youth/adult RE.

18 activities relate to groups including Covenant (6), Men’s/Women’s (6), IBPOC (2), GSA (1), Bridge (1), Book (1) and Daytimers (1).

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14 activities relate to social and/or fundraising events such as Love Soup/family events/intergenerational gatherings/kitchen duties/fundraiser (11), Thrift Sale (2), Craft Fair (1).

14 respondents reported being active but with no specific committees/groups named.

Results Tabulations

103 respondents listed specific or general activities (118 total Q6 responses includes two email contributors).

Activities	Mentions
1) Music-piano, singing (not choir), choir	20
2) Services-homily, tech/sound, worship services, flowers	18
3) Children's/Youth/Adult RE	18
4) Greeter/Welcome Table –either formally or informally*, coffee server/coordinator	15
5) General participation –active but no specific committee/groups named	14
6) Board of Trustees	14
7) Love Soup/Family events/Intergenerational gatherings/Kitchen duties/fundraiser	11
8) Environment	7
9) Task Forces**	7
10) B& G	6
11) Gardening	6
12) Art	6
13) Canvass Committee	6
14) Social Justice***	6
15) Covenant Groups	6
16) Men's/Women's Groups	6
17) Refugees	3
18) Redevelopment	3
19) Services Auction	3
20) Library	3
21) Lay Chaplains	3
22) Search Committees IM/Minister	3
23) CUC	2
24) Partner Church	2
25) Zoom Coffee hour host	2
26) Care and Concern	2
27) UCV Archives	2
28) MTT	2
29) Thrift sale	2
30) "Family Community Meals"	2
31) OOF Committee	2
32) Newsletter/Bulletin	2
33) IBPOC	2
34) GSA	1

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Activities	Mentions
35) Nominating Committee	1
36) COM	1
37) HR Committee	1
38) Koerner Committee	1
39) Finance committee	1
40) New U Workshops	1
41) Craft Fair	1
42) UCV Website	1
43) Bridge Group	1
44) Book Group	1
45) Clinical Supervisor of Oak Counseling	1
46) Photographer of church/choir	1
47) Co facilitated Groups on Despair and Grief	1
48) Administrative and polity work	1
49) Daytimers	1

Skills

Forty-seven skills are mentioned here, 41% of the responses. I’ ve organized them into six broad categories:

Ideas, organization, executive functioning (1 respondents) and facilitation (13 respondents) - organizational skill (8 respondents) ideas (2 respondents), facilitation (2 respondents) and so on...

People skills or group skills: (13 respondents) - included deep listening (4), counselling (5), facilitation (2), and conflict facilitation/peace-making (4).

Artistic and creative skills (8 respondents). Music was mentioned most often, and this included music staff, volunteer musicians. Art and artistic sensibility are also part of this.

Tech skills (7 respondents) - sound engineering (3), live-streaming (1), carpentry (1) ‘manual or practical skills’ (2).

Specialty Skills (7 respondents)

Others: A catch all category that includes:

- public speaking (2)
- drafting legal by-laws (1)
- nutrition (1)
- library skills - includes archives, (2)
- religion/spirituality (1)

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Perspectives:

I work to share my experience working to defend Indigenous rights.

Caregiver communicator, big picture thinker and educator, leader without limelight. Strive to learn and share knowledge. Big picture thinker wanting to connect ideas with intuitive sense of our aligned values.

IBPOC. She is used to being a minority, so has had more practices, thus a 'thicker skin' perhaps.

I have an open heart and a critical mind. I am not afraid to be vulnerable, ask hard questions, and face difficult truths. I am passionate about grassroots social justice initiatives and like to get to work on the ground.

He speaks out when he doesn't agree – e.g., when church tried to secure funds for operations from government agency that handles gambling; good at Big Picture stuff and not getting bogged down in the weeds; good at talking to people straight up and get things done.

I have a good solid education and so lots of knowledge to share; and "I have had many birthdays" and am grateful for my age and experience, which I can and do share.

The practice of not being humble allows us to be the best that we can be. I feel that I have practiced that in music and youth coffee houses in religious education, and in adult groups, literary and philosophical, that honours the fact that others are also doing that around me: showing their best side, being the best they can be.

The Unitarian Church of Vancouver provides me with a focus to express my gratitude to Life for all the blessings I have received.

Financial experience perspective.

Personality:

This question (Q6) asked people how their personality (among other things) contributes to our congregation. One third of respondents described some aspect of their personality in their responses.

People chose to share many different aspects of their personalities. There were a few strong themes and several with more than one mention:

- 14 self-described as friendly: good at engaging/seeking out/talking with/connecting with people; warm, easy to get along with
- 6 self-described as being optimistic, enthusiastic, upbeat, having positive energy

Other qualities people mentioned include:

- curiosity (4 mentions),
- being a good listener (4),
- sense of humour (2)

Overall, the ways in which people described their personalities contributing to life at UCV revolved mostly around supporting, fostering, and building the community that gives important

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meaning to so many members (see, for example, responses to Q5: What are the most important things our Unitarian community has contributed to your life?).

Data: All Personality statements from responses

- curiosity to learn and to share.
- open and willing to maintaining friendships ... being a good person, parenting awesome kids, and being present
- Leader without limelight; Strive to learn and share knowledge; Big picture thinker wanting to connect ideas with intuitive sense of our aligned values
- curiosity, interest in people/ projects, and outgoing personality are real attributes. She can initiate and make connections with people
- a sense of humour
- enthusiastic, friendly participant ...share my experiences and thoughts to connect meaningfully with others
- relatively upbeat and thoughtful energy to the various committees I chose to be on
- I am a good listener
- optimistic personality; my ability to be inclusive, recognize people's strengths and empower others; my considerable people skills;... participate in a whole-hearted way, am honest, dedicated to doing the best of which I am capable
- I like engaging with people in person.
- naturally a peace maker, will try to bridge the gap, help people understand each other better.
- I am imaginative and have a keen eye for beauty... I am fun and like to party.
- Energy! I used to have a lot of energy and could get a ball rolling (even if its direction then changed!)
- She likes to get along with people and has a curiosity about events and how things work.
- I like to seek out and talk to people at church who may be standing at the periphery of the busyness of church services: new guests, shy, older, disabled, etc.
- Love singing and dancing – and feasting... am grateful for my age and experience, which
- I can and do share... “I participate.” “I like doing a lot of what we do at UCV.”
- I think I listen as hard as I can
- short term projects. She likes to “pop in and pop out” She is very organized.
- I really care and am very committed.
- greets new people frequently, even if they’ve been around for awhile.
- willing to go deep ... open to whatever comes up.
- Easy to get along with, able to actively listen.
- good at completing tasks; initiating social events
- serving others.
- My personality—it’s warm; people easily warm to it; that helps bring people together.
- I’m creative; I brought creativity into the activities I supported, making it more fulsome for others. I am committed.
- Work hard – bring energy, enthusiasm ... encourage other to join by having discussions with people, encourage people to participate in UCV life. Meet one-on-one with people...

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Like to find ways out of conflicts by promoting mutual respect among parties with different beliefs and agendas. Likes to think visually and use imagination as well as logic – like things to be balanced

- I'm friendly and endlessly curious about others.
- lacking patience in some respects,
- listening skills, sense of humour, some have said kindness
- friendly, open minded, interested in people
- friendly and easy to get to know.
- a thoughtful observer, somewhat of an outsider.
- kind and loving, imaginative, friendly.
- I am trustworthy
- Not quick to anger or offence, often the bridge between two people who are upset at each other
- I'm pretty friendly
- tends to be pretty enthusiastic
- Assertive feminist American. Blurt factor

B7: Thought-Provoking Question #7

What do you think is the most important, life-giving characteristic of our UCV congregation? When we are at our best, what is the single most important value or characteristic that makes Unitarians or UCV unique?

Tally

126 names in all respondents table

10 no R

116 responses

Appreciation for the gifts they receive from this community is the dominant theme in these responses: 65 respondents (56%) spoke to this in this question, while 29 (25%) spoke about our shared values and principles as our most life-giving characteristic, and 20 (17%) identified our social action and activism.

Community

Of the 116 participants who responded to Q7, 65 (56%) stated that the community, the people – in who we are and how we function individually and collectively, as well as how we can grow, are the single most important life-giving characteristic of our congregation! As stated by 2 members: "We create this congregation together: not given from above. ... We can do this by how well we are able to work together / communicate / share / have synergy." The best characteristic is "the fact that the church community is there."

1. 16 respondents mentioned inclusivity, "a welcoming, accepting, appreciative nature." One participant stated how welcome a sense of belonging, camaraderie and friendship can be,

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especially if one has felt like a black sheep in other settings because of some aspect of who they are. A few mentioned that we don't always get this right but that we are working on it.

2. 16 respondents mentioned diversity: the many diverse "natures" of people, that we come from all "walks of life", that we are inclined to allow others to have their own beliefs, that many faiths, ideals and backgrounds bring a richness to the congregation. Specific forms of diversity, such as welcoming and being joined by all ethnicities as well as gender diverse people, were not overtly mentioned (one respondent said that valuing diversity reflects the importance of our first principle) but may have been implied in:

- we are seeking diversity
- "Even our limited diversity adds strength and vitality."

3. Qualities of UCVers: "Everyone is interesting, I can be myself."

12 members valued open-mindedness. As an example: being dogma free (as compared to other religions) is seen as unique to Unitarians. We are "not sheep (group think) ... even random comments can spark a lively discussion."

We strive to be non-judgemental and we have "influence beyond our numbers" due to our willingness to stand up for what we believe is right.

7 respondents said that UCVers like to explore and learn together. "Church is community and this community nurtures giving of talent, effort, research, thoughtfulness and activity toward the best projects."

- we have "a shared purpose toward justice, love, spiritual community, helping each other be the fullest version of ourselves."

-

5 members mentioned appreciating the compassion and sincerity they witness. For example:

- "... the members that inspire and guide us together to be more caring human beings."
- "the seemingly genuine outpouring of good will that I recognize in the faces, words and actions of the volunteers ..." such as greeters and many others.

5 respondents mentioned their appreciation of intergenerational connections. There is "a sense of belonging and respect for all ages. A sense almost of extended family."

- "Fascinating, interesting, intelligent, open, passionate, people ... AND the youth programs!"

4. Our efforts at good communication were mentioned by 5 members. One person stated that we "work harder to get along than some groups." We strive for thoughtful responses to each other and to create a safe place for dissent. One person characterized us as "the talkiest people ... a blessing and a curse!"

5. Shared leadership. "We use our own gifts and strengths to make formative change. We identify and develop emerging new leaders." We are courageous, steadfast, people who lead but also quietly and patiently work.

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Our Shared Values and Principles (with a glance toward spirituality)

Twenty-nine (29) respondents (25% of all respondents) spoke of our principles, our values, and opportunities for spiritual growth among the most important characteristics that make UCV and Unitarianism unique to them. Fifteen people spoke specifically about principles, usually mentioning our 7 Principles. Nine spoke about values (3 of these also mentioned principles):

- “To me the most important life-giving characteristic of our UCV is reminding ourselves – constantly -- of our Seven principles and doing what we can to live out those principles.”
- “The combination of shared values, principles and actions. This is an integral part of UCV and grounds our values in the real world.”
- “We live out our values and principles in a conscious way. Creatively thinking of the future and the impact on the wider world.”
- “[We] use our Principles to guide us ... [to] strive for equality and a better life for all [and] a cleaner and preserved environment.”
- “I believe the vision and principles of UCV create the conditions for change and growth that contribute to deepening spiritual growth and these same principles provide for the evolution of the principles with love, compassion and wisdom.”
- “UCVers ... have kept to our values over a long time.”
- “I think it’s our principles that define us.”

Spiritual exploration and growth was mentioned by 8 respondents:

- “The most important life-giving force is that UCV is a place of open spiritual inquiry – that is what makes it unique.”
- “Melding rationality, compassion and spirituality in actions to make a better world.”
- “The acceptance and incorporation of the different ways that human beings can express their spiritual. I was blown away [by the respect for] Earth-based rituals and that Social Justice actions can be seen as expressions of spirituality.”
- “UCV offers spiritual nourishment.”

Social Activism

Of the 116 replies to this question, 20 people, 17%, indicated social activism was the most important life-giving characteristic of the congregation. (All right, a few of these respondents had more than one characteristic.)

Many indicated that willingness, openness, the UCV Principles, are the most important characteristics and social action grows out of these qualities. Some said social action as spirituality was a unique concept.

When people mentioned social action, they most often referred to work on environment, refugees, and peoples’ presence on protests.

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When we are engaged, we have a balance between outward and inward looking thinking. Making a difference within ourselves and also to the wider community. Here is some of what respondents noted:

- “Activism is an important UCV characteristic. Examples are supporting the hotel workers protest, supporting activism for affordable housing, having a presence at protest marches.”
- “We are at our best in our active care for social justice and environmental protection and each other.”
- “Strive for equality and a better life for all. A cleaner and preserved environment.”
- “We are at our best when we live and show the rest of the community who and what we are through our actions, e.g., participating in various marches, using our kitchen to help (as I recall) families in need learn how to prepare & make the best use of food (instead of just distributing food as part of a food bank), holding our organic food markets, etc.”

B8: Thought-Provoking Question #8

Make three wishes for the future of our Vancouver Unitarian congregation.

Note: several people had more than 3 wishes others less than 3 wishes.

Tally:

113 members (includes 5 narrative responses)

8 non-members

2 youth

123 Total

Responses to this question were grouped into the following 10 main themes that at least 10% of respondents identified, presented from most mentioned to least mentioned.

1. Membership (101 mentions)
2. Internal desires (70 mentions)
3. External desires (59 mentions)
4. New Minister (18 mentions)
5. Worship Services (16 mentions)
6. Sanctuary use (15 mentions)
7. Problem solving/communication (15 mentions)
8. Religious Education/Exploration (RE) (15 mentions)
9. Site development (14 mentions)
10. Financial (12 mentions)

The following table lists these main themes and their corresponding sub-themes, including how many respondents identified each theme/sub-theme.

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Theme	Sub-theme	Responses
Membership	Diverse members ethnic/ economic	47 (38%)
	Younger members/ more families	32 (26%)
	Growth in members	14 (11%)
	More open and welcoming	8 (6.5%)
Total mentions		101
Internal desires	Change/grow/flourish	24 (19.5%)
	Center for hope, refuge	3 (2%)
	Place to debate, explore new perspectives	3 (2%)
	Encourage spirituality	6 (5%)
	Cultivate leadership	3 (2%)
	Less self righteous	4 (3%)
	Connect in more meaningful and fun ways beyond Sunday	7 (6%)
	More involvement of members	6 (5%)
	Elders	1
	Arts a larger part of our congregation	9 (7%)
	Community	4 (3%)
Total mentions		70
External desires	CUC/other Unitarians	5 (4%)
	Liaise with others and faith groups	4 (3%)
	Influence outside the church / community outreach	28 (23%)
	Reconciliation with Indigenous	5 (4%)
	More environmental, political, social justice involvement	17 (14%)
Total mentions		59
New minister		18 (15%)
Worship services		1
	Diverse	10 (8%)
	Hybrid online and in-person	5 (4%)
Total mentions		16
Sanctuary/campus use	General	4 (3%)
	More use by others	11 (9%)
Total mentions		15
Problem solving/ communication/ interacting	Improvements	15 (12%)
RE	Children	4 (3%)
	Youth	4 (3%)
	Adult	7 (6%)
Total mentions		15
Site development	Pro	11 (9%)
	Con	3 (2%)
Total mentions		14
Financial	Stability/sustainability	12 (10%)
Renaming		4 (3%)

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B9: Thought-Provoking Question #9

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Minister

- In next minister: accessible, less intellectual, more spiritual, warm hearted. Folksy.
- The sermons Steven gave on religious naturalism were very impactful for her
- If it ain't broke, don't fix it... Find a way to retain Rev. Cowtan, if she'll have us

Services and Ceremonies

- Have online services continue
- Services held twice a week
- We should continue to live-stream services so people can connect easily either in person or by Youtube
- We should return to the lunch program after services because food is such a pleasant way to connect.

Music

- Phillip said that the choir creates beauty and that beauty shows what is possible in the world
- To have much more diverse music – move away from the predominance of classical music which is very white, European-based, middle & upper middle class music. Along with diversity of people and cultures comes a diversity of music (the music that 'speaks to' various people/ groups / ages). Include also gospel, blues, jazz, various world music, folk, hip hop etc.

Shared Values (glance towards spirituality)

- He would like to add that the first question should have been, What drew you to UCV? This brings other threads out. He came because he heard there was a lay counseling program and wanted to broaden his social work experience and perspective. The first time he attended a service he looked around and saw pockets of very liberal people -- social workers, psychologists, etc. -- and their like-mindedness inspired him.
- We do not think of UCV as a "faith" community. We think of UCV as a group of open, kind, thoughtful people who are committed to and live UCV principles. We feel the term "faith" implies a requirement of unreasoning belief.
- I am grateful for my spiritual growth in this community

Community/home/safe welcoming space/gratitude

- UCV is such a gift - wish it was easier to share. So many turned off by religion and religious places. Love to attract people not interested in church.
- Considering all we have been through we are doing awesomely. We are all compassionate and engaged. And we are all thriving because of this great community and she is grateful for that!!
- Thank you for this opportunity to reflect and integrate more deeply the myriad gifts that the Unitarian Church has bestowed. I wish you well in your future endeavors in finding the "right" minister, he or she will have large shoes to fill.
- I'm very grateful for our hard-working volunteers who are central to the magic of UCV.

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- Last thought: One of the things that attracted my partner and I to UCV happened long ago. It was a debate between David Suzuki and Doug Collins. I believe it was about racism in Vancouver. The police were there in case they were needed. We both thought - I want to be a part of an organization like this.
- UCV feels like “home”. Belonging and Challenge.
- UCV is a place where I can bring my whole self.
- UCV is a place where if you come up with a cockamamie idea like starting a weekly Farmers’ Market in the parking area, lots of people join in and say, “Why not?”
- Go team!

Respectful Communications

- It is important to see conflict not as a rupture but an opportunity for new information and a new perspective and discussion. Take conflict and turn it on its head in a way, so that it is an opportunity for growth and understanding. Disagreement is an opportunity to learn. Let’s embrace healthy ways to transform it.
- In summation, some of the important parts are the elements of compassion, care, and concern and enhancing mutual support in the community. Spirituality is important in various elements of the services on Sundays and are an important part of the congregational life
- Specific services and rituals are important and particularly the history of UCV and the ancestor services and showing Unitarianism as a living faith.
- The hard work that a lot of people do and their dedication to task is very important.
- The Covenant of Healthy Relations and adding systems like convergent facilitation, restorative practices and listening practices are important, as is the central important part of the congregation and the Unitarian community.
- Healthy relations with the stewards of the land we occupy.
- We need more training or commitment to being listeners for everyone.
- People in the congregation need to be heard, to feel that they have been heard. These go together.

Membership

- My hope is that our ministry will reflect the diversity of Vancouver.
- When we started attending UCV there were few members from east of Main St. So although we still aren’t very diverse physically, we are more diverse in some ways. Even with that change, there are very few tradesmen in our congregation. It’s nice we pray for them on labour day and talk about jobs we used to do. Perhaps that is a barrier???
- The UCV community will only survive if we find a way to engage congregants meaningfully. To build diversity at UCV we need to offer appropriate programming. Remove/change the word ‘church’
- Remove “church” from UCV name
- Have a huge congregation, enormous.
- To go along with being elders (mentors not leaders)-indigenous feast for young women becoming a woman-seniors to be there to help younger people –we have their back.
- People come to UCV despite the age of the community. Older people can help younger.

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- Problem engaging new congregants-need to have a different role look for different ways to bring congregants to community. New people are on their own.
- As a new member who has joined at the end of her life, I want to thank those in UCV who have welcomed me and shown that I may still have something to contribute.

Sanctuary/Campus Use

- If there are now no plans to sell off or build housing on UCV land, try to make the campus an oasis of calm. It can't be as intricate as Sun Yat Sen garden but would it be possible to make the outside it more of a haven (just as the sanctuary is inside)? Not necessarily with high walls but with vegetation. May become more urgent if Oak Street is converted to condos and apartment buildings that look down into the grounds..
- Hewitt Centre could be redeveloped in a way that would add more pizzazz to it as a meeting place for both UCV and outside groups.
- Outcome of wishes: The surrounding properties where UCV is located are about to undergo drastic redevelopment over the next few years. My wishes would be that we would have created an 'oasis' of nature with green surrounding the UCV buildings and 'screening' it from the outside view.
- No one can compete with the number one religion in Vancouver = The Church of the Land Assembly

RE

- There has been little adult education in recent years. I look forward to much more now that we have a DLFD. Courses like Adult OWL, others offered by members and outsiders – a real exchange of ideas, and a source of inspiration.

Kudos for CIT

- I'd like to thank Rob Dainow for his unflinching efforts to make UCV an honourable and effective institution and can effectively listen to outliers as well as others.
- Thanks to Rob, Leslie, Marg and others who organized this survey.
- Thank you for this questionnaire. It's thoughtfully done. I can't wait to read the findings.

Other

- Hopes that a UCV administration person could take on doing the refugee committee admin work.

B10: Other Information

Other information came from sources other than the TPQs submitted by congregants. They include:

- Email input from individual members;
- What do you love about (or hope for) this congregation? – an “identity snapshot” by Kiersten Moore; and
- Hopes and intentions for the future at UCV – by Jamie Homeniuk.

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Email input from individual members

Four congregants chose to send thoughtful letters in place of responding to the Thought-Provoking Questions the CIT posed. These both converged and diverged from the rest.

Three of the four were captivated by the services they heard, and one identified Steven Epperson's homilies as a magnet.

Somewhat by chance, I dropped in one Sunday to the Unitarian church, [and] was fascinated by Steven Epperson's sermon.

To my surprise, I fell in love with the Sunday services.

Unitarianism is credible in our time. It has the capacity to speak powerfully into a troubled world.

Three spoke highly of UCV principles, though one wondered whether UCV has done *enough groundwork that underlies our principles and our practice*. The fourth separated principles and values, describing the principles as *cobbled-together product of a committee*. However, the common values he identified and admired were *interactions based on love, compassion and empathy*, a commitment to nature, and exploration of other religious traditions and spiritual practices.

All four have been engaged in the UCV programs, from joining the board, committees, and offering homilies etc.

I am aware that my experience will be as rich as my engagement.

Two of the four were searching for a community with values they liked. One was not searching for a community but liked what they found here - *My reasons for joining UCV did not include a desire to be a part of a community ... Nevertheless, it has given me joy to be a part of this community.*

One person's focus has been primarily outwards. 'The relationship between action and reflection is critical to who we become and what becomes of our efforts... I am highly suspicious of self-reflection and self-exploration taking place in the absence of an ongoing, committed and action-oriented practice of social change in the pursuit of social justice.'

This is how one person described who we are:

*We are a community of people who, at our best:
take religion seriously because, otherwise, what's the point?
share an interest in ideas;
tolerate intellectual disagreement; and
care deeply about the state of the world.*

Two of these members expressed different hopes for UCV:

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My hope is that we will change as we must without losing sight of our own best characteristics. I would include in those characteristics the commitment to enlightenment values that is implicit in the principles and purposes as they are presently constituted.

I hope that we will continue to listen to one another and truly tolerate our differences of opinion.

I hope that we will continue to contribute to the broader community: by providing a venue for musical and artistic expression; by giving to groups who care for the most disadvantaged members of society; by making educational resources ... available to non-members; and by setting a good example.

I hope that we will sustain ourselves at our present size (or perhaps a little larger) as an open, welcoming community.

To bring our distinctive, important religious position into sharper focus:

Repeat central understandings over and over again in Sunday services [so that they will] become deeply known, deeply taken for granted parts of [our] religious culture.

A brochure about Unitarianism ... would be exceedingly useful, both for our congregation and for visitors.

A short film ... of biographies of important Unitarians ... could well reach a considerable audience.

What do you love about (or hope for) this congregation? – an “identity snapshot” by Kiersten Moore

Kiersten asked congregants in the March 6 Treehouse Rules service to answer – in person, in the online chat, or after the service – the question “What do you love about (or hope for) this congregation?” Their answers provide a snapshot of what 44 congregants identified as UCV’s most central and impactful characteristics. Most responses fit into these nine themes:

1. Sense of community and belonging.

Being in a community of friends.

Very accepting community.

2. The people in the congregation.

Some of the best people I know are here.

A lot of good human beings to look up to as role models and mentors.

3. Relationships with others in this community, friends.

I love the opportunities this congregation has given me and the friends that I've made here.

Old friends, sharing of life experiences and ideas.

4. Shared values and beliefs.

I love the 8 principles and the sincere efforts to live according to those principles.

5. Music.

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I absolutely adore the choir. I am so glad they can sing in person again.

6. Sanctuary and grounds.

A wonderful physical space (especially the sanctuary.

7. Activism and outreach.

Enthusiasm for projects, social justice work.

Spirit of Action.

8. Accepting, not judgemental.

Unashamed to be my whole self.

I love that it is a faith-based church with no dogma.

9. Open-minded, tolerance for change.

Challenging my ideas/out of the box thinking. People to disagree with.

Its friendliness, its tolerance for change, its progressive ideas.

Some people were full of praise and appreciation:

I love the sermons, all the meaningful work people are doing on committees. I love people being respectful of my opinions even if they are different. I love all the different groups. The eight principles. The architecture of the building enabling me to bring nature in during service.

I love the 8 principles, openness, trust, feeling of safety, music, participation, and engagement. Commitment to the 8 principles.

I love the respect and love people in this congregation show for each other. I love the music, its choice and the way it is presented. I like the way everything is organized and how things seem to run smoothly. I love the different worthwhile causes this community is involved in.

I love everything about this congregation: the people, the values, the care for social justice, the care for our environment, the seeking of diversity, so progressive.”

I am new. There are a lot of things to love here.

Here is one extensive description of what they “love about (or hope for) this congregation”:

Kindness, care about each other and planet. Welcoming, accepting, not dogmatic or forceful. Like-minded people who believe in the same fundamental principles such as goodness, kindness, humanity, helping others, protecting environment. Offers opportunity to do your own spiritual exploration with support but no pressure. Diversity of perspectives. Many opportunities to contribute and find meaning or make an impact. Safe harbour during turbulent, changing times.

These responses to Kiersten’s question are very much in line with the 2021 TPQ responses that are the focal points of the CIT’s identity investigation. We should be pleased and grateful that there are no big surprises in this exploration of UCV’s identity and that we are, in fact, very consistent in how we describe the best of who and what we are as a Unitarian community.

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Hopes and intentions for the future at UCV – by Jamie Homeniuk

Jamie Homeniuk presented in the Jan. 30, 2022 service these seven intentions and hopes that four UCV groups shared with her:

1. To **embrace** the wonderful gifts and possibilities of discovering UCV anew, and to welcoming new families into a growing and increasingly diverse congregation.
2. To deepen our **respect** for ourselves, our own worth, our own ideas, and our own hearts.
3. To have **fun** as a community, to have opportunities to enjoy one another again.
4. To be unashamed of our creations, and to **create** for the purpose of joy and without the fear of failure.
5. To **support** each other in our spiritual growth, to listen respectfully, and to provide the supportive warmth of community.
6. To have **courage** to face our own discomfort in living up to our 8th principle; to have courage to stand up for our planet, and to commit to the emotional work of fighting for change.
7. To find a way to **reconcile** ourselves with changes inside our community, to heal from old conflicts within our community, and continue moving forward hand in hand.

These hopes and intentions are consistent with the most central and impactful characteristics congregants expressed in their responses to the TPQs and in the other perspectives described in this section. While these hopes and intentions are from only a small sample of the Vancouver Unitarians community, they are a hopeful indicator of desired futures for UCV that are an extension of UCV's present and past rather than a sharp departure or rupture.

Appendix C: ROI Workshops – Summary of Themes and Possibility Statements

NO.	SUGGESTED THEMES	POSSIBILITY STATEMENTS
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of spirituality – spiritual home; strong minister important, with powerful, thought-provoking sermons; no dogma, but powerful/relatable principles. • Social action, outreach/engagement with broader community, “community of action”. • Desire for more broad-based and diverse congregation (and ministry): families, children, youth, young adults; LGBTQ; BIPOC; multi-cultural. • More younger people, younger leadership. • Entry into UCV community through activities of interest (e.g., Environment Committee, choir) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We sustain and grow our spiritual life through community engagement, and social and environmental activism.” <i>or</i> “Our spiritual and activism lives are interconnected.” • The UCV Campus is a welcoming and inclusive hub for a spectrum of diverse spiritual practices, social activism, artistic expression, education and mentorship, building young leaders in all of the mentioned categories. • We are easy to get to know.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting to make a difference in our community and the world is our “religious observance” • Experience of just “being” in our magnificent Sanctuary in quiet and stillness • Looking to UCV growth in numbers and diversity • Value and satisfaction in work with groups (especially men’s), committees and teams • Charitable, supportive community • Intergenerational community and support of all, especially youth • A faith built by people with no credo • Marrying rationality and values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are a growing and diverse congregation that reflects to community around us. • Our campus design, environment and events draw people in. • We are well-known in the world as a progressive community that lives and acts on our values. • We honour our Covenant of Healthy Relations and work collectively to uphold it and constructively confront differences and disagreements.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The value of music to everyone and in the services • The importance of church school to children (Patti) 	<p>Wishes for UCV in future:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More diversity of ages, ethnicities

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NO.	SUGGESTED THEMES	POSSIBILITY STATEMENTS
	<p>and to parents who see their kids benefit, get more involved themselves and also form parent support groups (informal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activism, whether or not the interviewees were activists themselves. Environment, Refugee, social justice all examples of the way UCV reaches out to the community • Services - music, thoughtful guest speakers, exploration of other rel traditions, ritual, spiritual nourishment • Importance of friendliness, openness, non-judgemental attitudes, respect, depth of connection • Importance of involvement - whether in RE, small groups, larger groups like the choir • Emphasis on people and groups who put the Unitarian principles into action/daily life. • Support during difficult times - illnesses, death, personal problems • Interest and excitement around Sanctuary upgrades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial security • Adult RE classes • Better conflict facilitation tools, problem-solving tools • More community outreach so people know about UCV
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We share a sense of meaning and belonging; UCV is open and welcoming and invites people to share what they can, both in the community and in the world at large. • We are curious – about the world, nature, other religions, and finding meaning and purpose in life. We are open-minded. • This community is made up of different groups who come for different reasons and find their place in different sub-groups: “seekers of the way“, i.e., non-dogmatic search for meaning; social action groups; care and concern; looking for a spiritual community, including ritual. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are easy to get to know. • We are a place for children and families. • We integrate our Covenant of Healthy Relations in all aspects of our shared community so that we are a living, growing, and connected community of diverse individuals. • We view conflict not as a rupture or an opportunity to argue, but as an opportunity to consider new information and to learn. • We care about and for one another and believe the best about each other at all times.

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NO.	SUGGESTED THEMES	POSSIBILITY STATEMENTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thinking in images, we can envision a circle of caring that looks both inside (to take care of our own) and looks outside (to make a difference in the world). “We are engaged with the world” and “We are engaged with our own community”. Can envision a series of connected circles, all intersecting in the center. This congregation is a living, breathing community that each person adds to with their own gifts. We express our shared values in so many different ways. It is meaningful to get to know different people in different ways. Services provide meaning to many of us, albeit in different ways (e.g., lay led services; sharing Unitarian history and weaving it with current events; learn something new at every service). The services auction was an activity with multiple impacts and meeting many members’ needs, connecting people together, having fun, finding ways to share and give what we can offer. 	
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appreciation of balance in services between intellect, spirituality, activism and emotion/personal stories; opportunities to learn; some discomfort with spirituality/faith/worship language Activism - Refugees, Environment, Social Justice, letter-writing, marches Wish for more diversity in ages, races, genders - and questions: why has this not been achieved? Are we as welcoming as we need to be? Do we listen as well as we should? Wish for more Adult RE Importance of music 	

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NO.	SUGGESTED THEMES	POSSIBILITY STATEMENTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love for sanctuary and grounds • Appreciation for acceptance of people as they are, openness, support • Appreciation of on-line streaming for islanders, people who have left but want the church 	
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Came from different backgrounds, discovered Unitarianism in mid-life • Christian language such as faith, worship, carries baggage, makes them uncomfortable • Singing - a way to connect to heart, people, to contribute to the service and the congregation; a way to establish belonging • Appreciation of 7 principles, activism, the ‘walk our talk’ aspect of UCV; specifically mention Environment Team, Refugee Team, Salmon farming • Wish for more Adult RE; hope that Kiersten will encourage people in congregation to offer courses as well as join courses • Wish for better use of the Covenant of Healthy Relations • Wish for newcomers to be welcomed on a more long- term basis, perhaps even mentored. 	
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of music in UCV services, both choir and instrumental • Concept of church as a village, in which we are bound together through good times and bad • Pride and importance of walking our talk, Outreach Opportunities Fund, refugees, environment, social justice 	Wish: Better conflict facilitation; a desire for conflicts to be resolved without relationship ending

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NO.	SUGGESTED THEMES	POSSIBILITY STATEMENTS
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want to be more diverse and inclusive, and more welcoming to young persons and those who do not look like us. • Want to see more children and younger people. • Quality of Sunday services is a pillar of UCV. • We have a lot of engagement with the communities beyond our walls, including other UU congregations and organizations (CUC, UUA) • Hybrid services (in-person + online) are here to stay and are/will be important. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We offer engaging services for both those in person and those from afar – <i>or</i> – We offer engaging services that are accessible to all, including with remote access. • We are a community that welcomes many different people and that makes them feel good about being here in this community – being engaged and part of a bigger community. • We create events at UCV that members and others will anticipate, and experience as life-affirming, and life-changing. • We are a joyous community and, as the spirit moves us, we love to sing and dance and express ourselves through art. • We cultivate ministerial leadership, actively supporting the development of new ministers by hosting ministerial interns and by supporting the education and training of UCV members seeking to enter the ministry.
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This congregation reflects diversity – racial, cultural, demographic, and abilities. • We walk the talk; we are action-oriented. • Music has an important place in our congregational life – as an expression of our social justice values, as a source of beauty, as a source of energy. • Services and sermons often serve as stepping stones to action. • Relationships with people are foundational to our congregational life. • We take on inspiring projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I see a microcosm of Greater Vancouver when I walk into UCV, and I hear music that represents those populations. • Our minister is a person from a minority group.

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10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notions of community drawing from people of all walks of life. • We need fun activities. Service auction and thrift market were fun to do together but too much work. • Wish congregation was more diverse. • Being a member allows us to be part of something; it is grounding. • We share similar values. • The atmosphere is “values in action”. • Members treat each other with respect. • There are important role models amongst members. • Music is central. • Emphasis on moral values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are a welcoming and inclusive community. • We live our values through our actions; all contributions are valued. • A healthy community inspires within us engagement, celebration, respect and fun. • We know how to have fun. • Volunteers step up and step back following succession planning for longevity. • Our sermons are varied, storied, challenging, memorable and themed. • Service comes from the heart and the mind.
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hoping that UCV remains actively involved in supporting refugees • There are 2 truths: We need to change / We are doing well. Eg: keenly interested in social justice and just not all that friendly. • How do we get talking ... REALLY?! • Key point individually and collectively ... Are you/we willing to change? How do we? • Yes we need more young families but we also need more adults who are curious and eager to know our children and youth and children who are curious and eager to also know some of the adults, other than just their parents and teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UCV includes and engages a diverse cross section of the Vancouver and Lower Mainland population, as well as truly being multi-generational. • UCV is a diverse spiritual centre which is a safe place for all people who are interested in examining what matters in life including those who do not want to be a church.
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergenerational experience and relationships • Importance of families • Questioning with integrity • Engaging services, inspiring homilies, intellectually stimulating • Connection to place and space – especially important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse families see themselves reflected at the center of caring, intergenerational community. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayground at services • Our congregation reflects the diversity of the larger community. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued investment of money and time in attracting

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	<p>for kids as a feeling of ownership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care and curiosity from others in the community • Passions of members being brought to UCV 	<p>families and diverse congregants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment and training for everyone in unconscious bias and celebrating differences • Services are radically inclusive and serve everyone. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretch breaks at services • Playground at services • Able to view and listen from Hewitt, and having hybrid services • Info table by the sanctuary (outside, where it can immediately be seen) • More kid bingo
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and inclusiveness: accepted and accepting • Different kinds of services • UCV shows the world isn't terrible, and we as people aren't either • Shared values • ACAB, Black Lives Matter, and down with the patriarchy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are local leaders of social action. • We respect people's pronouns and genderqueer people are part of our community. • We actively support children, youth, and whole families. • We are bursting at the seams with families. • Our services are diverse in content, structure, and personalities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least once a month there is someone on stage who isn't old and white • Service bingo • Support for babyroom and parents
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious liberalism – welcome different faith traditions • Inclusive – of other religious faiths/traditions; people of all ages, backgrounds, and sexual orientations; services and sermons delivered by many different persons, not always ministers. • Elements of services are important to many of us (e.g., greet your neighbours, lighting candles, children's story, time for meditation, music, Carry the Flame). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We offer only in-person services in our sanctuary. (Me: Really?) • We walk the talk. • We welcome everyone and we all help each other be the best version of ourselves. • We strive to be the best version of ourselves and the change we want to see in the world. • Everyone is welcome here. / Everyone belongs here, free from dogma and hierarchy.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committees connect us to the larger world outside our congregation. Connected and contributing community; we connect and contribute to each other within our congregation and to the world outside our congregation We foster and provide opportunities for personal, spiritual growth, and this serves as the groundwork for our work in outside communities; this brings a spiritual aspect to our social justice work. 	
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis and appreciation of Steven Epperson, Phillip Hewett and their sermons. Great appreciation of community, their own involvement, refugee, environment and social justice work. And fundraising projects that pulled people together such as the Thrift sale, the Farmers' Market, Craft Fairs, Services Auctions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UCV reaches out to help others, through social justice, refugees and environmental work. UCV is a self-sustaining congregation through rentals, pledging, and fund-raising events such as book sales, thrift sales, Christmas Craft sales. We invite in people through events.
16	<i>Nothing submitted</i>	<i>Nothing submitted</i>
17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities which include creativity / action seem more powerful than only talking. Working together builds community. Some suggestions: mending and sewing group, cooking together, letter writing, making youtube videos (one example: from individual families or different causes etc.) ... helping with these would also help train our tech people social justice work should be hands on and local. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UCV has a full, demographically diverse, congregation. One example is age diversity (but several others as well) which could include older kids mentoring younger kids, mixing seniors and young children during daytime hours (e.g., if we had a daycare on site) UCV uses its space for the community as well as congregation to aid in financial sustainability as well as good use of space. Some examples: concerts, youth productions UCV uses its space in the after-school hours, not just evenings. Could be kids' music or other programs. A side benefit would be that parents would become familiar with our space and would hopefully see evidence of our principles and programs UCV is involved in the downtown eastside e.g.: recycling

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		children's clothing, feeding people, bringing kids to some of our kids' programs such as Harry Potter summer school.
18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People at UCV are authentic, exciting, cool, exhilarating (there is energy in the air) and definitely not dull, passionate, open-minded, thoughtful, caring, and value-driven. • Inner directed towards personal growth and outer directed to work on social justice and environmental issues, supporting and sponsoring refugees, etc.; we want to put our principles to work in the world. • We value worship: sermons that are relevant (to our times), challenging (us to think more deeply), motivating (to act on our principles); music. • Resilience, e.g., outreach in Covid. • UCV offers a range of possibilities – can do all kinds of things outside of services. • People, relationships, beauty, sanctuary, the campus and grounds, compassion and creativity, religious education of many kinds, too. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We share our stories as a bridge from the past to the future, to carry our impetus forward. • We are open and welcoming and easy to get to know. We welcome everybody. • We are a community of diverse, open-minded, and supportive people. • We sustain this place in the world and are sustained by it. • We live our message and practise our principles. • Our minister leads, challenges, and inspires with compassion. • UCV radiates with enough inner and outer beauty, joy, loving kindness, courage and inspiration to carry us through the week in our daily lives.
Misc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for adult RE classes. • Appreciation for all who 'walk the talk' of UCV principles, especially re social justice, environment, all the ways UCV reaches out to the community. • Admiration expressed frequently for Steven Epperson. The importance of Indigenous values, and guest speakers who come to UCV. Social action (refugees, environment, social justice) and spiritual values both important. • General agreement re the need for more diversity, more youth and more members generally. • Acceptance of people and differences very 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unitarians walk their talk and provide an example to other groups. • When we have differences and disagreements, we remind ourselves to follow our principles and the Covenant of Healthy Relationships. • We respect the decisions we have agreed on. • As a congregation, UCV reaches out and embraces others in order to grow. We accept the importance of change and growth. • UCV encourages and respects children and young people.

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	important.	