

First Parish Unitarian Universalist

2025-2027 Vision Goal #1

INCREASE MEMBER ENGAGEMENT OF YOUNG FAMILIES AND WORKING MEMBERS

Statement of Basis

December 2024

Vision Goal #1: Increase engagement by ensuring the logistics for our gatherings meet the needs of our members. For families that means maximizing childcare availability for Sunday service, meetings, and activities, with an eye toward synchronicity of effort and expenses. For working members that means scheduling meetings at various times outside typical business hours.

Basis of Need

At First Parish, young families and working members are critical to the vitality and future of our community. However, we sometimes schedule meetings during business hours. We also suspect many young families are challenged to attend meetings, events, and church activities due to the need for childcare. These barriers often lead to missed opportunities for engagement and participation, as parents struggle to balance church involvement with the demands of raising children. A more synchronized and streamlined approach to childcare—both in terms of availability and budget—would empower families to engage more fully in church life without the burden of finding childcare on their own or dealing with unpredictable childcare arrangements. First Parish needs to learn from young families and working adults about the best ways to support their engagement, and then take action to put these steps in place. First Parish needs to make a long-term, concerted effort to allow families to trust that resources will be available in order to make commitments to church life. First Parish can foster a more welcoming and supportive environment for young families.

Objective of the Vision Goal

The objective of this vision goal is to increase engagement. This will be achieved by:

1. Increasing awareness of the timing of our meetings to meet the needs of all when possible.
2. Coordinating childcare availability for key church activities such as meetings, social events, and worship services.
3. Streamlining the budgeting process for childcare to ensure that resources are used effectively, reducing unnecessary duplication of effort or funding.
4. Encouraging and empowering young families to attend and participate more in church life by reducing the logistical challenges related to childcare.

5. Aligning childcare resources with the church's broader goals of inclusivity and support for all congregants, ensuring that young families can engage in a variety of church activities.

Condition to be Achieved

Success will be measured by:

1. A noticeable increase in young family and working members participation in church events and activities.
2. Positive feedback from parents on the reliability and quality of childcare available during meetings and events.
3. A more consistent process for coordinating and budgeting childcare services.
4. More diverse participation at meetings.

In addition, we will assess success through surveys and interviews with young families to ensure that the childcare model is both accessible and effective.

First Parish Unitarian Universalist

2025-2027 Vision Goal #2

INCREASING SOCIAL ACTION ENGAGEMENT IN A SUSTAINABLE, RIGHT-SIZED MANNER

Statement of Basis

December 2024

Vision Goal #2: Increase social action engagement in a sustainable and right-sized manner, with a focus on creating safe spaces for the Portland community and connecting with the broader community in resistance.

Basis of Need

Social action has always been a central value for First Parish, but at times with best intentions, our efforts have been large in scope, difficult to sustain. Many in our congregation feel passionate about social justice issues but are unsure of how to effectively channel their energy into lasting impact. Additionally, there is an increasing need in our local community for safe spaces and support networks, especially for those marginalized or affected by the broader socio-political landscape. By creating and/or supporting focused, sustainable social action opportunities, First Parish can maintain its meaningful and impactful presence within Portland, providing both resources and solidarity to the wider community. This vision goal seeks to balance our desire for impactful social action with the need for sustainable, right-sized efforts that engage our congregation without overwhelming it.

Objective of the Vision Goal

The primary objective of this goal is to increase engagement in social action initiatives that are not only aligned with our values but also designed to be manageable and sustainable. This will involve:

1. Identifying and focusing on a limited number of social action initiatives that have a meaningful and measurable impact, such as providing safe spaces for marginalized communities in Portland or supporting local organizations in resistance to harmful policies.
2. Offering opportunities for congregants to get involved in these initiatives in a way that feels actionable and right-sized, ensuring we do not overextend ourselves as individuals or as a congregation.
3. Exploring ways to connect First Parish with broader social movements and community resistance efforts in Portland and beyond, fostering collaboration and solidarity.
4. Ensuring that social action opportunities are structured in such a way that they can be sustained over time, without burning out volunteers or creating a sense of overwhelm.

Condition to be Achieved

Success will be reflected by:

1. Increased participation and enthusiasm from congregants, with individuals feeling that their contributions are making a real difference.
2. Positive feedback from community partners, indicating that First Parish is providing valuable support in resistance efforts or community-building.
3. A sustainable model of social action engagement that avoids overburdening individuals, ensuring that opportunities remain accessible, manageable, and impactful.

Through surveys, participation tracking, and feedback from community partners, we will gauge the success and sustainability of our social action efforts, ensuring that they meet the needs of both our congregation and the broader Portland community.