

FAITH + WORKS

The HUUB 2016 Planning Year Interim Report



Table of Contents

1. Introduction
 - a. Report Summary
 - b. Organizing Principles
 - c. Strategies
2. Believing
 - a. Our Commitment
 - b. Our Strategic Planning Process
 - c. Our Business Plan
 - d. Our Outreach and Marketing
3. Building
 - a. Our WORK
 - b. Our Campus
 - c. Our Events and Programs
 - d. Our Off-campus Network and Activity
4. Discovering
 - a. Our Future Projects and Planning Year Report
 - b. Our Timing and Relevance

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Report compiled by Charlie Wirene with input
from HUUB board and Wednesday Grant Club

The Church at the Heart of the Community

A year ago, after an extensive exploratory and visioning process, First Church's congregation decided to pivot and change its focus. After more than a century of traditional church and ministry, the congregation decided to turn its faith outward and develop an Urban Ministry, opening its doors to the surrounding community and creating a resource to bring its liberal faith to life in the city of Orange.

The HUUB is an outgrowth of First Church and the seven UU principles. As an urban congregation in the 21st century, we must be an active member of society, which we do as a welcoming neighbor and by considering UU principles in all our work.

As a 125-year old anchor institution in an urban setting, just steps from the Main street business district, city schools, the public library, the train station, and other churches, First Church has a responsibility to help improve the city it has such deep roots in. In order to build community and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person, we need to know, respect, and work with our neighbors - we need to live the UU principles.



The Church at the Heart of the Community (cont'd)

In the center of this diverse city, the HUUB is a natural physical and social connector for developing relationships among people based on justice, equity, and compassion. Out of relationship building comes acceptance and respect among people with different identities, improving the democratic process, amplifying diverse voices, and facilitating the exchange of ideas.

This new direction is relevant and timely for a variety of reasons including but not limited to:

- Our location in the very center of a dense, urban environment - The Heart of Orange - where we've been for more than a century as one of the city's only remaining anchor institutions, which need to be protected and invested because of their ability to mend the social fabric of the city.
- Over the last 50 years there has been an extensive disinvestment in the city, resulting in social and economic issues that have prevented the city and the people living here from thriving. Transit oriented development is threatening to displace those who have lived, worked and supported the city for generations. There needs to be a unified vision and voice in opposition to these threats.
- Our Unitarian Universalist faith and values are grounded in social action work to advance social justice. And now, because of these circumstances, we are called, as people of faith, to take action.

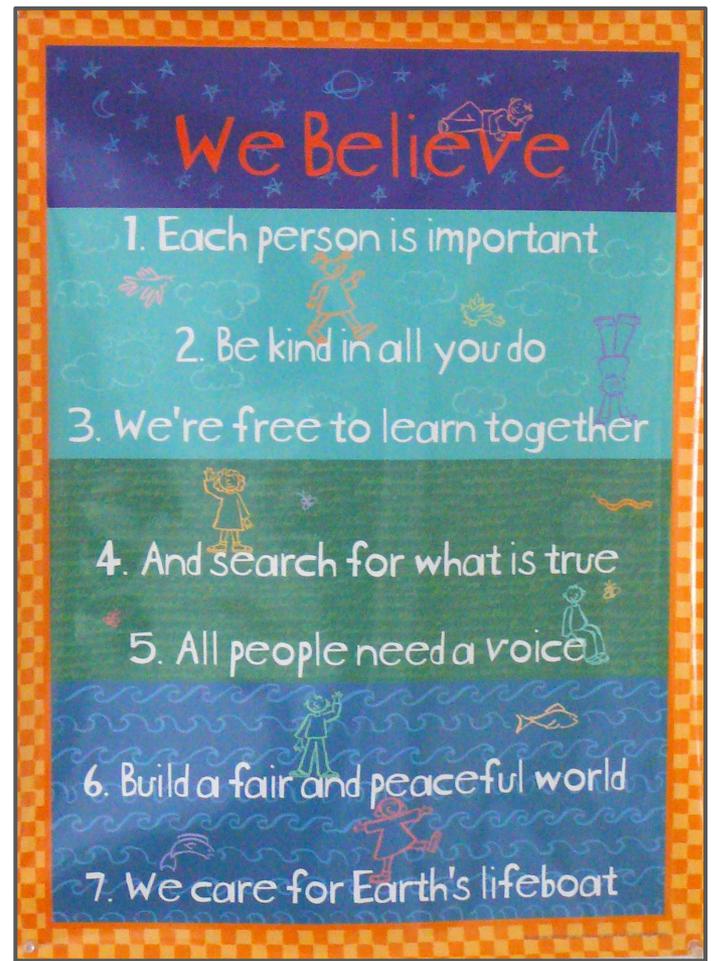
Organizing Principles

Over the last six months, three principles or theories have emerged to organize and guide the ideas and new direction First Church is exploring through the creation of the HUUB.

They are:

1. The Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism;
2. Belief Bonding; and
3. Asset Based Community Development (ABCD).

These organizing principles have been, and will continue to be, seen in the HUUB's strategies, programming, physical improvements to the buildings and grounds, and plans for the future.



The UU Principles for children

The Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism

The Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism are poignant for UUs and non-UUs alike because they are beautifully open and, as such, relevant across all divides. Thinking of them as a unified guiding principle or set of values will help to build strong relationships, create community, and make Orange a healthier city.

The inherent worth and dignity of every person.
Justice, equity and compassion in human relations.
Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.
A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.
The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.
The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.
Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Belief Bonding

In a therapeutic setting the social worker and client go through a series of steps to first understand the issue and then to help the client resolve the issue. This process is true in working with communities or groups as well. These steps include **collecting information** (assessment), **making sense of the information** (diagnosis), **collaborating with the client to develop an action plan for change** (treatment plan) and finally **determining whether the process has been helpful** (evaluation). **Mutual trust between worker and client must first be established** before any work can be done. This rapport building is the foundation of “Belief Bonding.”

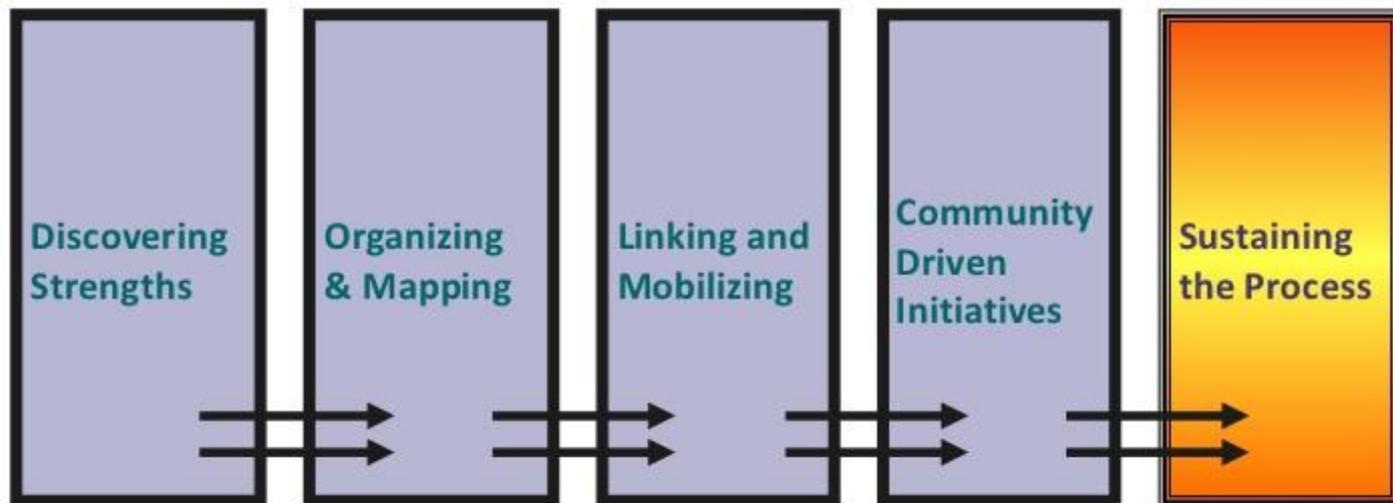
The three main components of this practice theory include; 1. **belief in the worker’s competence**, 2. **belief in the client’s capacity for change** and 3. **belief in the client’s worthiness**. The degree to which each possess these characteristics and the degree to which each believes in themselves and each other will determine the success of any intervention.

Having practiced its liberal faith in near isolation for many years, yet being considered an anchor institution by those with a history of Orange, it is essential that First Church and HUUB **re-establish a level of trust**, not only **with community organizations and service providers but directly with the people** we hope to work with.

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)

While the dominant model of work in low-income and marginalized communities assumes communities are lacking or deficient and in-need of outside support, ABCD's initial assumption is that **communities are full of people with assets and gifts** already investing in the community that can be supported to amplify their impact. Instead of a needs assessment, ABCD begins with a Capacity Inventory to **map a community's gifts and assets**, from which it **builds to strengthen social fabric and social infrastructure**. This theory of practice is directly in line with the values and worldview of the Unitarian Universalists.

ABCD Methodology



Strategies

With the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism, Belief Bonding, and ABCD as guiding principles, First Church's buildings and grounds as resources, and the HUUB as a means of bringing them together, our strategies complement the church's spiritual work, supporting the idea that FAITH + WORKS can create a healthier, happier, and stronger community within the church and without. Our strategies are:

1. **Believing** - Orange can change for the better and that the HUUB can contribute in a meaningful way to its change;
2. **Building** - taking care of and improving our campus, while building programs, relationships, and bridges between social justice actors;
3. **Discovering** - the gifts that exist in the city of Orange, the role the HUUB has in discovering and connecting these gifts, and how anchor institutions stay relevant and mend the social fabric of a place.

Our Commitment & Strategic Planning Process

Our first strategy is **believing**, and it is the First Church congregation's beliefs that the church still had a role and responsibility in Orange and in the **potential of the HUUB to generate meaningful change** that started this project moving forward. These beliefs are fundamental components of belief bonding and necessary in **the pursuit of creating community and advancing social justice causes**.

The strength of this belief and the **congregation's willingness to go all in are reflected in the commitment** of creating a board of trustees and hiring a managing director to spearhead a planning year.

After applying for and receiving 501c3 status with the IRS in January, the HUUB board began a **strategic planning process to help situate, organize and direct our activity** moving forward. During monthly HUUB board meetings from March to May, the board and managing director created a mission statement, conducted a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) and a PEST Analysis (Political, Economic, Socio-Cultural, Technological), and had a visioning session with over 30 people. These helped us to **explain what we are doing as well as better understand our internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats**.

Strategic Planning: Mission Statement and SWOT Analysis

At the March board meeting we developed a mission statement and went through a SWOT analysis.

The HUUB mission is to be a force that **brings people together** so that they can use their gifts to **advance peace, economic justice, respect, and educational attainment.**”

Strengths

- Good communication
- Open minded
- Have a planning year
- FUUCEC & HUUB have a strong 3-person team working together
- Our urban campus has programmable spaces and a staff charged with its upkeep
- We are centrally located near mass transit.
- We are debt free with reliable income
- UU Values are strong

Weaknesses

- Campus age, decrepitude, and relevant demands
- No funding commitment from First Church beyond the first year start-up funds
- Minimal capital until funding via grants.
- Building and programs need substantial funding.
- Programming niche is not yet identified.
- Limited funding for capacity building and programming means we cannot staff programs at the moment

Opportunities

- Bring UU values of social and economic justice to local/state conversations about gentrification.
- Develop strong working relationship with area churches.
- Work to identify gifts of area workers.
- Using our network, we can find & partner with local groups for programming.
- Become a venue for UU gatherings to address pressing issues

Threats

- Insufficient income due to low fundraising results and limited grant awards
- First Church stops supporting HUUB due to perceived poor first year
- Poor documentation of program accomplishments
- Failure to fully develop relationships with UUs
- Failure to fully engage ABCD strategies
- Partners may lose funding
- Building use may cause unexpected costs

Strategic Planning: PEST

We looked at a handful of different reports about Orange by a diversity of authors to assess external factors influencing the HUUB. These included:

- Michel Cantal-Dupart's report on the Heart of Orange Plan, 2009
- JGSC Group, Bringing Business Back to Orange, 2009
- Orange: Hubs and Anchors, from Parsons Infrastructure and Modern City, 2014
- Community Economic Development Report by the Watkins Center at Trenton State, 2015
- Placemaking Report by Pratt Studio, 2015
- Man in the Street Interviews, from Urban Evaluation, Teachers College, 2015
- Together North Jersey Regional Plan, 2015

We found evidence to support our belief that there is a **need for flexible connections outside the rigid and established structures that exist** in Orange's institutions, community based organizations, and government. There is a distinct need for **connections between the groups** already working in Orange, because most are working in isolation from each other, missing opportunities and potential partnerships and collaborations.

Strategic Planning: Visioning

We invited Rev Gilmore back to First Church to talk about the changing role and structure of churches. We invited area UUs and Orange community members to engage in a conversation about the HUUB's potential and its future. We used the event as an open visioning session for what challenges and opportunities folks with outside perspectives would see that we might be missing. It was a great afternoon of insight and conversation.



The HUUB Managing Director Charlie Wirene opening the “Church at the Heart of the Community” forum, with guest speaker Om Prakash John Gilmore

Our Business Plan

During this planning year, one of the HUUB's major concerns is figuring out **how to sustain itself financially**. First Church's commitment to support the HUUB's planning year by paying the first year's salary of the founding managing director is incredibly generous but unsustainable. While a formal business plan is on the to-do list, the HUUB has already begun pursuing outside resources. These include foundation and public grants, individual donors, gifts from other UU congregations, and a more diverse rental income. We've submitted two grant proposals and a grant pre-application to date:

- UU Funding - our proposal is currently in committee with support of a committee member
- Kenworthy Swift - unsuccessful application
- Ben & Jerry's Foundation (pre-application) - have not yet been invited to submit a full proposal

We have updated our building fee schedule for one time events while also continuing to look for new long term tenants to increase our rental income. We are currently in conversations with an Imam and his mosque about renting space for Ramadan with interest to extend afterwards. We are also speaking with a summer dance program and a summer art studio about renting our space in July & August with potential interest to extend if they are successful.

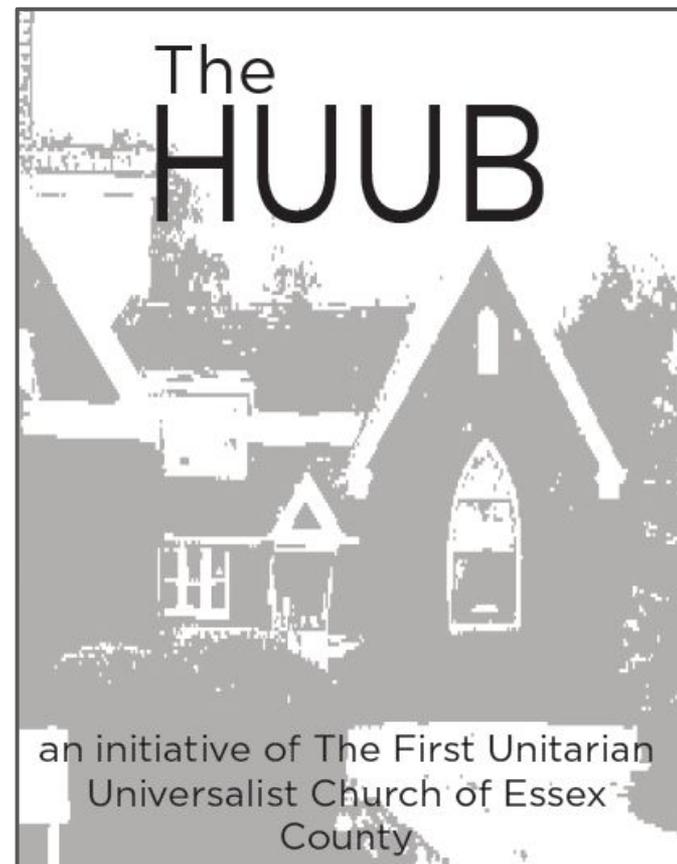
Our Outreach & Marketing

As a new organization, the most effective way of reaching people is through social media, including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

We've created a Facebook page - www.facebook.com/TheHUUB - but have yet to set up Instagram and Twitter accounts. We continue to advertise events at the church and as we host more events, we will be able to share images as well.

We've started the process of developing a basic web presence via a dedicated page on First Church's website, with the intention of eventually creating a HUUB website (www.OrangeHUUB.org)

We've created a bi-fold brochure that can be shared to describe the HUUB. We are also working on a logo for the HUUB.



The cover of the HUUB bi-fold informational brochure

Building

Our WORK

Our Campus

Our Open Doors

Our Off-Campus Network and Activity



Our WORK

The HUUB's WORK is meant to compliment the congregation's traditional faith based practice by bringing the the seven UU principles out of the church and into the community. *Building* describes this work, encompassing our physical, social, and programmatic activities.

Essential to being a physical hub of activity is the maintenance and upkeep of that space, which is happening extensively in and around the physical buildings and campus at 35 and 47 Cleveland Street.

Building connections and opportunities for discussion and collaboration between people is one of the roles we are already playing in Orange by inviting people to hold events at the church. This work meets a clear need for a better organized and more cohesive vision of what a just and healthy city looks like.

Being part of the community means having relationships with the people and groups that live and work in the city around us. This means getting out of the church to spend time and build trust with people.

We are also building new programs to bring UU values and principles into the city in new, creative, and less traditional ways.

First Church Campus

Our buildings are our largest asset, around for nearly 125 years, and they need to be taken care of if the church is going to be a sustainable hub of activity. Much of the necessary maintenance and upkeep has been deferred, creating emergencies that need to be dealt with before larger repairs and improvements. The process has started and we will continue to offer increasingly beautiful and useful space.



A picture of the church's new entrance with a rendering of the proposed FAITH + WORKS signs

Repairs, Improvements, and Looking Forward

Over the last six months we've dealt with a handful of emergencies and put out a number of metaphorical fires that have cropped up. At the same time, we have begun to plan and strategize for the larger maintenance and upkeep that needs to happen with any building, while also thinking about improvements that can make the campus more effective and efficient.

Repairs & Improvements

- Buildings toured with congregation and lunch with tenants to get history, ideas, and user requests
- Ramp was installed
- Roof leak was patched
- Boiler was repaired with chemical patch
- Oil tank was removed
- Sanctuary porch was repaired
- Blodgett and cloak rooms, stairway and hallway moulding were painted

Projects Looking Forward

- In Process - basement stairs in both buildings, & cloak room bathroom door
- Plans for 2016-17
 - Roof
 - Siding
 - Deal with chimney/flue at kitchen window
 - Grant submissions for capital projects
 - Energy audit
 - Grant research on energy efficiency
 - Replace boiler
 - Develop regular service schedule

Our Open Doors

Since November 2015, the HUUB has opened the church doors and welcomed in a handful of local groups and organizations for a wide variety of activities. In just the first six months we have been actively working to make things happen at First Church, we've created a new energy around the campus. The following are the groups and events we've hosted at First Church since November 2015.

- *RADICAL Orange*
 - Just & Safe Orange: Youth & Crime panel
 - Youth led Mayoral Debate
- *University of Orange & World Fellowship*
 - Fun Night Fundraiser Variety Show for WF
- *The Church at The Heart of the Community*
 - Om Prakash Rev John Gilmore spoke on "Transformation in an Emergent Society," followed by a conversation about the HUUB
- *Laundry Worker Center & Wind of the Spirit*
 - Our new tenants surveying the community to eventually provide training and workshops on organizing
- *Orange Community School Initiative*
 - Hosted the Winter/Spring 2016 Orange Adult School Open House
- *Orange Community*
 - Memorial for Jordan Bryant

We also have two potential summer youth programs interested in using the space: a dance program (Worldwide Orphans) and an intensive art studio (Kiatude Creative).

Our Open Doors

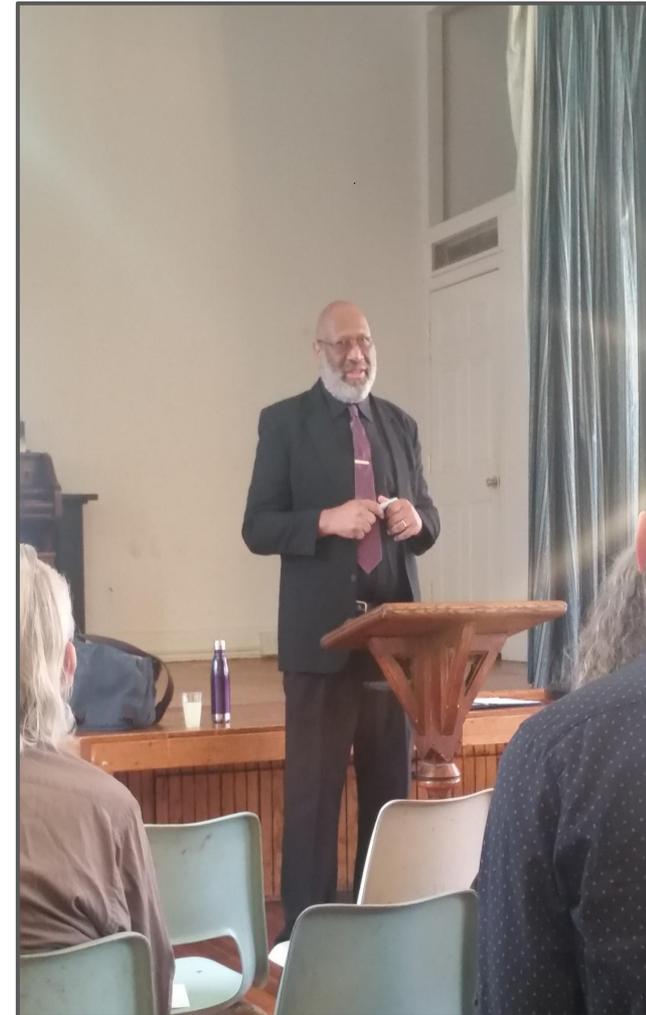


The photo on the left are the youth panelists from Just & Safe Orange: Youth & Crime panel, and the photo on the right is of our newest tenants, Laundry Worker Center and Wind of the Spirit, celebrating a victory on the stolen wages campaign in East Orange. While all of the UU principles can be found in both of these, the ones most embodied here are recognizing the **each person is important (1st)**, of promoting **justice, equity, and compassion in human relations (2nd)**, and **that all people need a voice (5th)**.

Our Open Doors



The photo on the left is of the RADICAL Orange Youth Led Mayoral Debate, and the photo on the right is of Om Prakash during the *Church at The Heart of the Community* event. Again, all the UU principles are represented in these events, but those that stand out most are that **we are free to learn together (3rd)** and **search for what is true (4th)**, and to work to **build a fair and peaceful world (6th)**.



Our Open Doors



The tragic shootings that have racked Orange in the last few months are absolutely devastating for individuals, families, and the community. This is a photo of Jordan Bryant, one of the young men who recently murdered by gun violence. After an offer to use the YWCA fell through the day before the memorial, Mr Bryant's family got word that First Church might be able to help them out. After being contacted on Friday at 3pm, by 3:30pm that same day we had confirmed the space was available for Saturday's memorial and offered it to the Bryant family. This photo was taken at the memorial service, which was attended by around 150 people, many of them young black men from Orange. Our offer to host this event brings to life **the inherent worth and dignity of every person (1st), compassion in human relations (2nd), the goal of world communitiy and peace (6th).**

Our Off-Campus Network and Activity

Just as we are inviting individuals and groups into First Church, we are actively leaving the church as well, contributing to projects First Church has not traditionally been a part of. Participating in these activities and events helps **expand our network of allies and collaborators, building community through personal relationships**, the work that is necessary to effectively move towards a common vision of a more **just, equitable, and compassionate city**.

Groups and Projects In and Around Orange

- Reverse Archaeology
- Grant Club
- The Orange Interfaith Council (OIC)
- Healthy Orange
- Metro NY Annual District Meeting
 - Workshop & ABCD Activity



Orange artist Mike Mal painting the reverse archeology exhibition in Orange Public Library

Discovering

Our Proposed Programs and Projects

- ABCD Asset Inventory
- 100 Year Old House Conference, Workshop, and Community Dinner
- Imagine Equality Tour

Our Planning Year Report

Our Timing and Relevance



Cover of *Building Community From the Inside Out*, by Kretzmann & McKnight

Future Projects and Planning Year Report

Community Asset Survey

The foundational process and tool in ABCD is an asset survey. We have proposed hiring and training young folks from Orange to be trained in and paid to conduct a community asset survey, from which they can start creating connections and supporting community activity.

100 Year Old House Conference & Dinner

- Saturday, November 5, 2016
- Conference address issues that come with old houses thinking about risks to community health, via fires, abandonment, etc. Topics include:
 - Upkeep, maintenance, and improvement
 - Housing affordability
 - Investment ideas that support existing community residents instead of tearing it apart, a la gentrification with displacement

Imagine Equality

- 2019 Will be the 400th Anniversary of the first Africans being sold into bondage in America
- Interview tour about the myriad ways inequality manifests today and ideas people have for creating a more equal country over the next century
- Project in partnership with the University of Orange
- The HUUB will do outreach to bring people into the project to talk about their experiences of inequality and proposals to make a more equal country

This interim report is an update of what's been accomplished roughly six months into the HUUB's planning year. In November we will present a report on the entire 2015-2016 planning year with proposals for the 2016-2017 year and beyond.

Our Timing and Relevance

As we've started into this planning year, evaluating and beginning needed upkeep and maintenance, building relationships outside the church and inviting people in to use the space, it's become apparent that we do indeed have a role to play.

The HUUB is relevant. Megan Foley, of the UUA, contributed to our workshop at the Metro NY Annual meeting and talked about the evolving model of church in the 21st century - not the 125 member congregation, owning its own building, with specific ministries for everything. This model is still grounded in mid-20th century society and culture, which is out of date. First Church and the HUUB are a new model and **our commitment and work are both important and relevant.**



First Church president Mindy Thompson Fullilove speaking at the Metro NY Annual District meeting during our "New Directions for Urban Ministry" workshop May 7, 2016

Thank you!

We appreciate your support for and engagement with the project we've undertaken. We can't do it alone. Please be in touch with Charlie Wirene if you have any questions about The HUUB or just to say Hello!

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