

#LOVEBEYONDBELIEF

Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Mankato

Next Steps Weekend
Sept 30 to Oct 2, 2022

Rachel Maxwell, Consultant





Rachel Maxwell, MBA

- Unitarian Universalist for 25 years
- Member of Edmonds UU Congregation in WA
- MBA, founder of community funding platform
- Leads events on Money Value & Meaning
- Stewardship for Us
 - Five team members
 - UU Congregations only
 - UUA endorsed
- Passionate about building sustainable, generous, UU congregations and making their missions manifest in the world-- A world which could not possibly need it more!
- Contact info: Rachel@StewardshipforUs.com





Opening words

Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons

...the flowing creek, in its careless fullness, in its unceasing abundance, is a kind of model for the ceaseless creative energy of the universe, which is also pouring out and over us all the time, whether we see it or not. We stand always in the flow; the waters of life are washing over us in a springtime torrent every day we live.


Which is not to say that scarcity is not a reality as well. It can be easy to lose track of the simple abundances of life if we are hungry, or unsheltered, or in want of something as simple as mittens in the raw Minnesota winter.

We can understand the abundance of the universe in two ways: as an invitation to complacency, or as an invitation to generosity. Much depends upon that choice. For if we respond with complacency then the abundance of the universe comes to a stop in us. It is when we respond to the abundance of life with gratitude and generosity that we become a part of that universal creativity.

A large orange shape on the left side of the slide, consisting of a vertical rectangle on the left and a quarter-circle on the right.

Why am I
here?

I was invited here by your Board because you would like to have sustainable stewardship of your congregation and you want to figure out how head in that direction from where you are right now.

A yellow dashed line in the bottom right corner, consisting of four curved segments that form a partial arc.

What is the Next Steps process?

Gather information about your congregation

Review your history, finances and structure before the weekend

Questionnaire with your input

Meetings with minister, board, lay leaders, and congregants

Workshop open to all

Provide reflections and recommendations:

Presentation to congregation:

Current state and giving now

Next steps and recommendations

Written report within two weeks



Photo by [Jake Hills](#) on [Unsplash](#)

At UUFM you are

LOVED

WELCOMED

&

NEEDED

Just as you are...






Your Mission

We are a welcoming people of diverse beliefs who commit to nourish the spirit, broaden the mind, nurture the earth and build community.

Love Beyond Belief



You Chose UUFMs' 3 Greatest Strengths

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/UUMankato>

36 Respondents

YOUR TOP FIVE CHOICES:

20 – Welcoming / Inclusive

20 – Ministers / Staff

16 – Social Justice Programs / Activism

16 – Sunday Services

15 – Community / People



Top Challenges to Address in Next 5 Years

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/UUMankato>

36 Respondents

YOUR TOP CHALLENGES:

30 – Membership Growth

17 – Program Funding

16 – Congregational Engagement

11 – Lay Leaders / Volunteers

REMEMBER

No human being comes through your door in order to be another pledging household.



Top Priorities Going Forward

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/UUMankato>

36 Respondents

YOUR TOP PRIORITIES:

23 – Congregational Engagement

19 – Membership Growth

16 – Finances, Program Funding and/or Stewardship

15 – Social Justice, Community Outreach, Activism

UUFM by the numbers

FY 2022 figures

Financial Figures reported in Treasurer's
Report 7/15/2022

114 Members

76 Pledging
Households

Pledge Income +
Contributions
~\$163,000

House Rental
Income
matches expenses

Mortgage
\$61,500

Annual Budgeted
Expenses
\$213,902

Net Income
-\$39,916

Cash and
Reserves ~
\$370,000

Pledge Distribution

FY 2023 Pledges

- Total Pledges = \$150,300
- Average pledge = \$2,312
- Median pledge = \$1,500

- Pledge at 80th % = \$3,960
(This pledge is “often a good reflection of the giving habits of families with typical resources and high commitment” – Dan Hotchkiss)

- 64 Households total

Each 25% = ~ \$37,500	# of Pledging Households	Annual Pledge Range	% of Contributing Households
First 25%	4	\$6,780 to \$13,500	6%
Second 25%	7	\$4,800 to \$6,600	11%
Third 25%	12	\$2,500 to \$4,260	19%
Fourth 25%	41	\$0 to \$2,400	64%

Comparisons:

UUA FY 2021 Data from all congregations

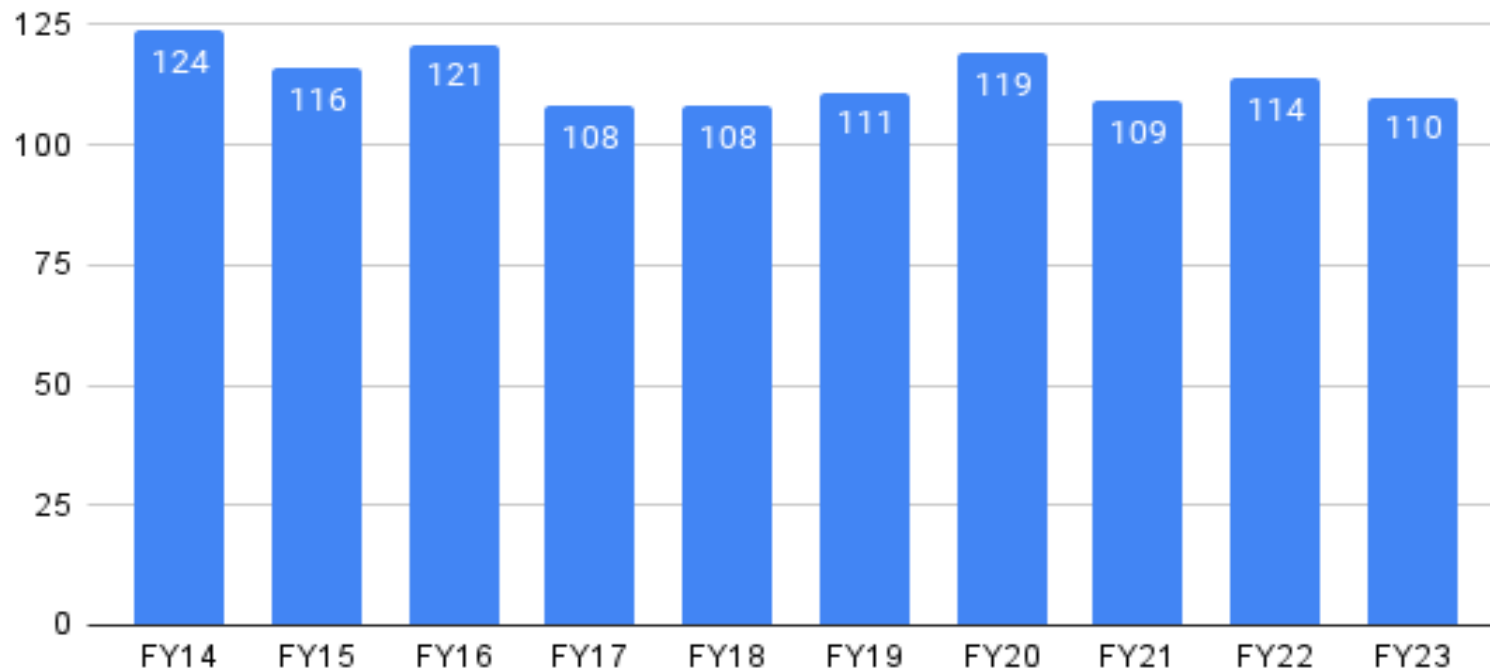
Of the 180 congregations In the MidAmerica Region you are:

- 70th in number of members
- 70th in number of pledging households
- 41st highest average pledge
- 39th in RE enrollment
- 63rd in annual operating expenses
- 78th in annual pledging income

Of the 69 congregations your size across the UUA (100 to 120 members) you are:

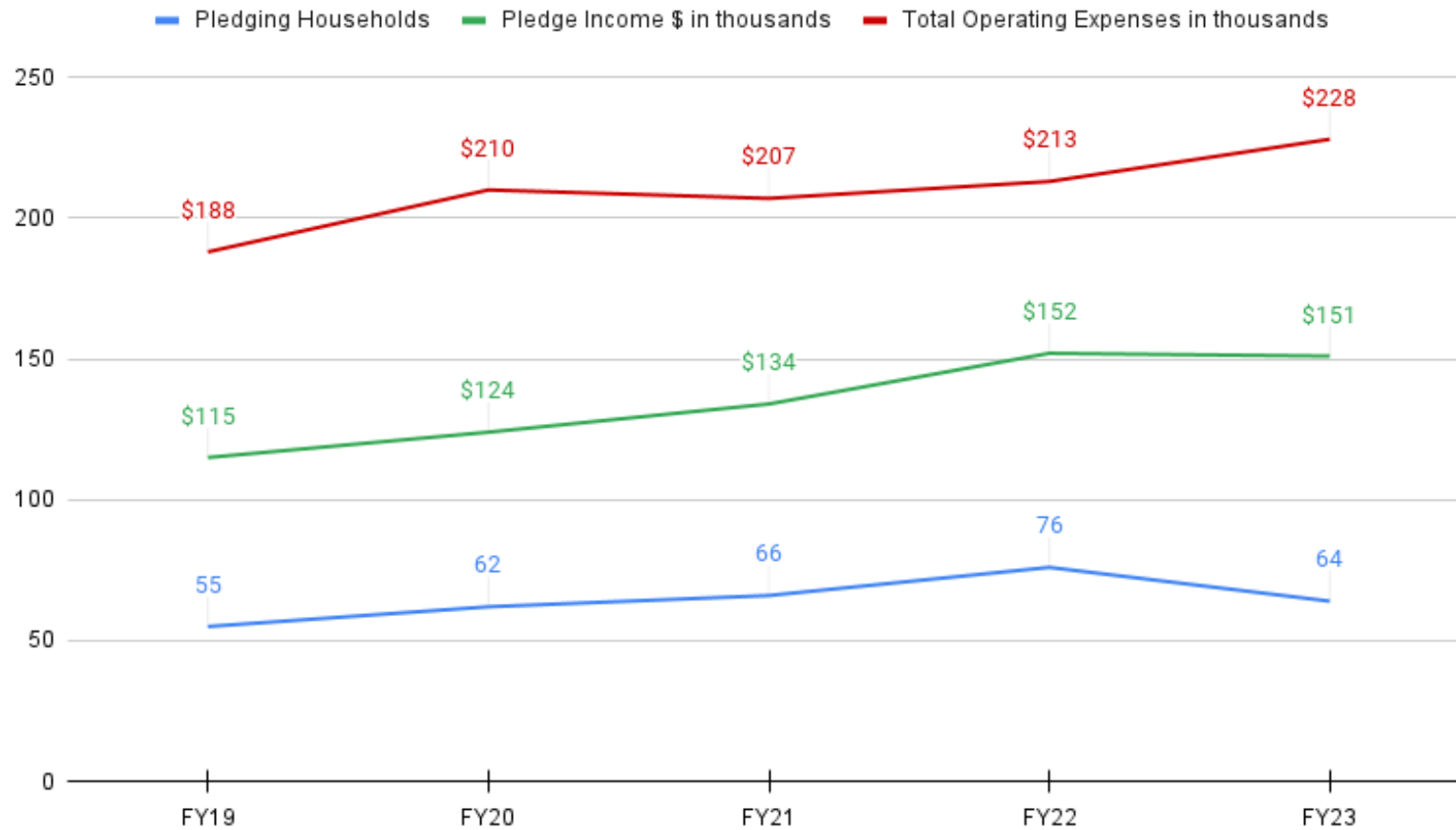
- 23rd in number of members
- 8th highest average annual pledge
- 6th in RE enrollment
- 20th in annual operating expenses
- 31st in annual pledging income
- 47th in number of pledging households

Membership over Time



Between 2010 and 2020 in USA Church membership has dropped 23% overall – You beat the trend!

Pledging and Expenses



Context is important

- Global Pandemic
- Couldn't gather together
- Increased racism and hate crimes
- Gun violence and mass shootings
- Threatened democracy
- Accelerating climate related disasters

We are tired and we need each other more than ever.

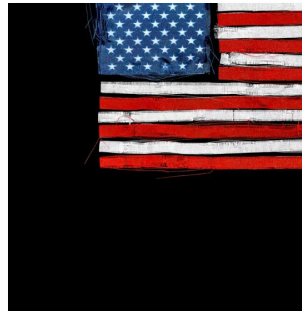


Photo illustration by Matt Chase

DEMOCRACY CHALLENGED

'A Crisis Coming': The Twin Threats to American Democracy

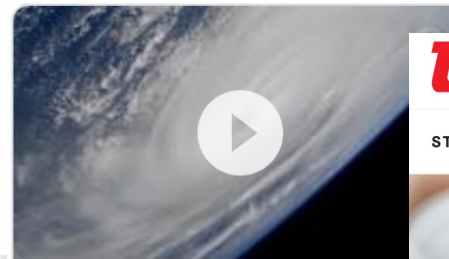
Give this article 1.9K



By David Leonhardt

David Leonhardt is a senior writer at The Times who won the Pulitzer Prize for his coverage of the Great Recession.

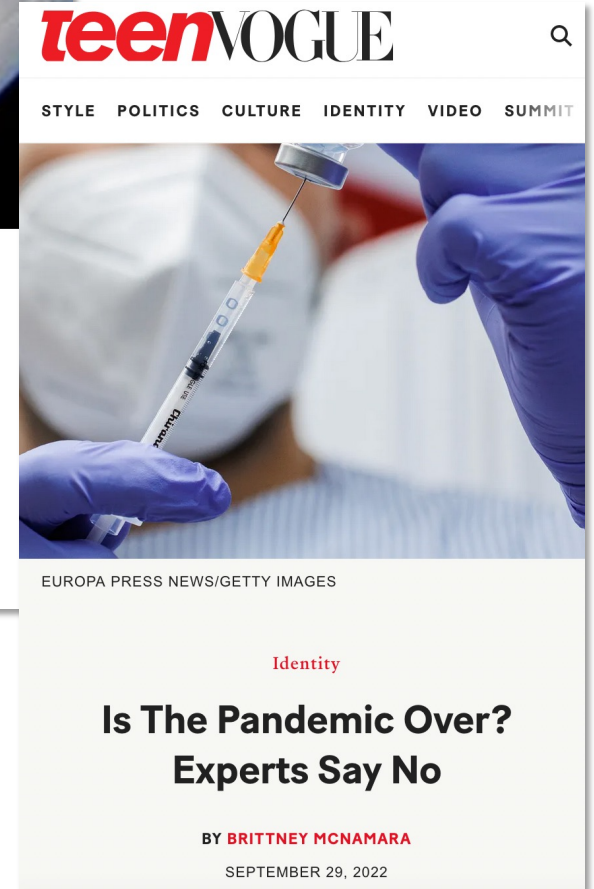
Published Sept. 17, 2022 Updated Sept. 21, 2022



B Bloomberg.com

Hurricane Ian Is a Climate Disaster for the History Books

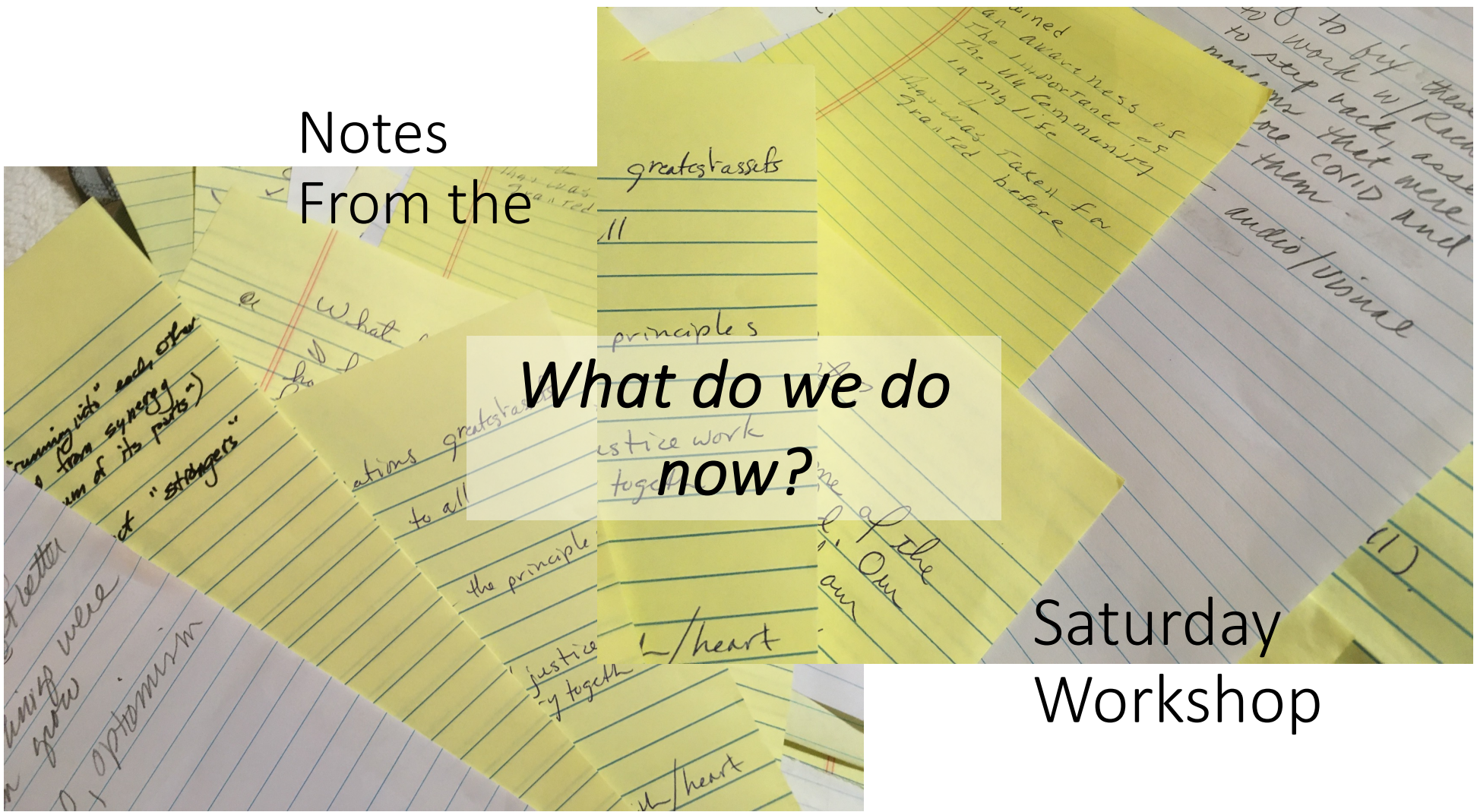
2 days ago



Notes
From the

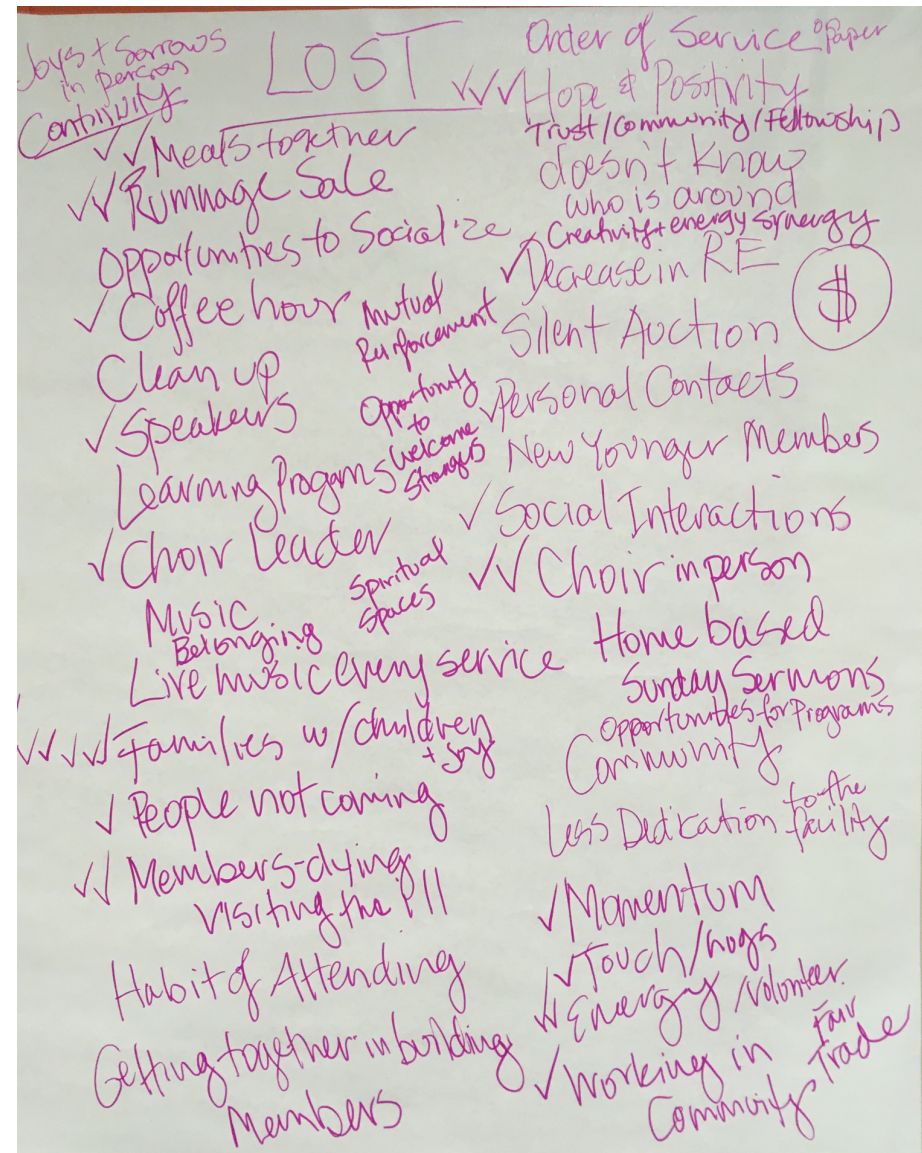
What do we do
now?

Saturday
Workshop



What have you lost?

- The joy of families and children in our midst
- Hope and positive energy
- Volunteers
- Meals together
- Choir and live music every Sunday
- Being together in community / eating together
- Momentum and continuity
- Members
- Continuity
- Opportunities to welcome strangers
- Fundraisers
- Mutual reinforcement



I feel we have lost
some of the hope
and positivity that we
had. Our first
minister had just

.....

GAINED

Opportunity to fix existing problems
Tech Skills
Flexibility
Hybrid Tech/Tech vs
Some Celebrations
Gratitude
Shared worship online
Variety in worship
Soul Matters
Connection thru Believers
Federal \$
Lower Costs
Zoom
Services more accessible
Awareness of Importance of UU
Faith in Ability to Survive
Confidence in Commitments
Continuity

Patience
Facing Struggle Together
Better Web presence
Independence/Agency for Team
Appreciation of what matters + what we have
New ways of doing
Recognition of importance of gathering physically
Land Acknowledgement
Persistence / carry on in face of Adversity
New Projector
New Cleaning Person
2 Communicators
- office Admin peeps
Breeze
Dedicated Leaders
Walking group
Breakfast group on zoom
week lunch at Mall

Opportunity to Assess & Address Prob
Community Closeness

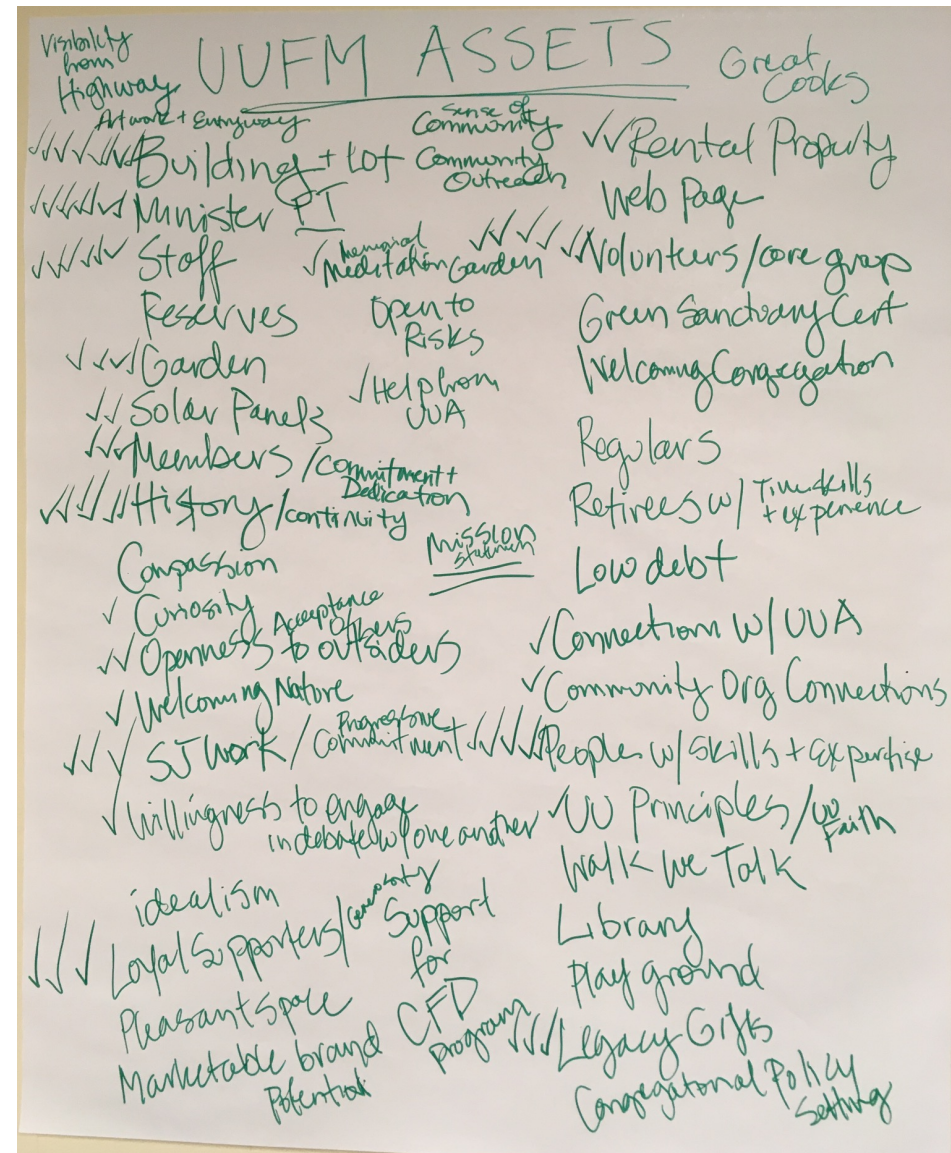
What have you gained?

- Shared worship online
- Tech skills and Zoom
- Equipment to record and stream services live
- Confidence in our commitment to each other
- Faith in the ability to survive
- A Land Acknowledgement
- Understanding of the importance of gathering in person together
- Appreciation of what matters / what we have
- Flexibility
- Opportunities to address our problems
- More accessible services
- Walking / breakfast groups
- Federal dollars

I gained an awareness of the importance of the UU community in my life that was taken for granted before.

What are your assets?

- Building / Lot / Rental property
- Full time and talented Minister
- Core group of amazing volunteers/leaders
- Wonderful staff
- Long important history
- People with skills and expertise
- Great community and loyal supporters
- Generous legacy gifts
- Connections with and support from UUA
- Openness, compassion, curiosity
- Your UU Faith and the Seven Principles
- Our garden
- Beautiful entry and artwork
- Marketable brand potential



UU Principles are core to all we do.
We walk our talk – we work the principles
We love each other
We help each other with social justice work
We cook, eat and are merry together
We craft
We sing
We worship
We care about our children's faith/heart development
We bought solar panels because we care
We are so damn smart and creative!
So many skills and gifts
We have long time UU history as people and as a congregation
We make everyone feel welcome and belong
No one has to change who they are to fit in here.

*Let us put our
minds together
and see what life
we can make for
our children.*

– Sitting Bull



A few ideas from the weekend for inviting and engaging:



- Make being liberal cool!
- 7 principles-bomb Mankato – post the principles with your website in bathrooms and on bulletin boards all over the city!
- Develop small groups that parents and families want to join.
- Share the stories of what you do as individuals with each other – on your webpage and social media – include pics
- Partner with local organizations or faith communities to host talks relevant to young families and others who need to find UUFM
- Share your offering plate with local orgs
- Develop programs for families – after school and daytime for homeschooling families.
- Rent/provide space to a preschool or day care

Next Steps

- Articulate what your role is now in the larger Mankato community.
- Think outside the box about how you might engage people in who you are and what you have and do here.
- Develop a strategic and financial plan for the next five years. *How* will you engage people and increase giving?
- Try some easy and simple new things using the assets you already have.



Closing words

Cottonwood Trees by Rev. Lynn Ungar

The cottonwoods are
flinging themselves outward
filling the air with spiraling flurries,
covering lawns in deepening drifts.
You could not call this generosity.
Like any being they
let loose what they have
in order to survive,
in order that their lives might continue
in a new year's growth.



The more seeds they send out
on their lofted journeys
the greater the chance
for their kind to flourish.
There is no hesitation.
No one asks how much
they will give. Without words
they know so clearly
that everything depends
on what we call giving
that which the world knows as creation.



Thank you!! #LoveBeyondBelief UUFM