

**Prairie Circle Unitarian  
Universalist Congregation**

**Long-Range Plan  
2008-2013**

Approved by the Board \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by the Membership \_\_\_\_\_

## **Introduction**

Prairie Circle Unitarian Universalist Congregation (PCUUC) is a young and growing congregation that strives to be a diverse religious experience and a vital institution that identifies itself as the religious community with a warm heart, an open mind, and a social conscience. The Prairie Circle Mission Statement is as follows:

*Prairie Circle strives to be a warm and welcoming spiritual home committed to:*

*Encouraging individual spiritual development*

*Seeking to apply spiritual values to everyday life*

*Promoting understanding and respect for all people of the world; their cultures and their religious traditions*

*Participating actively in the communities it serves*

*Nurturing a responsible and healthy relationship with the environment*

## **Process :**

The first long-range plan for PCUUC was developed in 2005. In 2007 the congregation decided to update the plan. The PCUUC board appointed a committee with the goal of having the changes ready for a vote at the congregational meeting in June 2008. The process used to develop this plan was a review of other long-range plans, hold a congregational retreat to get direction from the congregation, survey all current committees and have a series of discussions with PCUUC members and those in PCUUC leadership positions. This draft plan was then reviewed, and discussed by the congregation at a congregational meeting in February 2008. It was submitted to the PCUUC board and approved by the Church Board in April 2008. A formal submission of the final draft of the long-range plan and request for approval will be submitted to the members for a vote as a part of the annual congregational meeting in June 2008. The plan has a duration of five (5) years. In the future, the Board will be expected to review progress of the plan at least every two years. If changes are needed, they will be presented to the membership at the congregational meetings.

## Goals :

The primary goal of the congregation is to be a full service church affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association. A full service church provides weekly Sunday worship, liberal lifespan religious education for children, youths and adults, and a full complement of ministerial services.

The two types of secondary goals which will be addressed in this long-range plan and which support the primary goals are program goals and support goals.

The program goals are:

1. Worship
  - Provide quality worship services by providing inspirational, intellectually challenging spiritually nourishing, continuity with the Unitarian Universalistic faith and the expression of the living tradition of our faith through the services.
2. Music
  - a. Provide rewarding musical experiences for the congregation
  - b. Enhance the diversity of the music program
3. Education
  - a. Support life-long liberal religious education (children, youths, and adults)
  - b. Enhance a strong religious education program
  - c. Initiate small group ministry (covenant groups)
4. Membership Function
  - a. Attract new visitors
  - b. Welcome visitors
  - c. Encourage visitors to become members
  - d. Assimilate, retain and sustain existing members into the PCUUC community life
5. Social Justice
  - a. Foster, within the congregation, communication, education, advocacy, and action on social justice issues
  - b. Provide leadership to the congregation for determining social policies and actions.
6. Member support
  - a. Offer care and concern for the membership
  - b. Establish processes for supporting members in time of crisis
  - c. Enhance social programming to help people get to know one another
7. Offer Professional Ministry

The PCUUC committees (Worship, Music, Religious Education, Social Action, Caring, etc.), are individually and collectively charged with implementing plans and activities directed toward attaining the goals of this Long Range Plan. The particular goals, plans and activities of individual committees are contained in their mission statements, records of meetings, and related committee documents.

The support goals are:

1. Leadership
  - a. Establish a process for encouraging resourceful members to take leadership roles
  - b. Provide support and training for leaders
  - c. Develop and implement a volunteer plan
2. Finance
  - a. Insure sound financial footing with a balanced budget and adequate reserves
  - b. Establish and build a capital fund, separate from operating funds
  - c. Plan for office equipment additions and property management
3. Administration PCUUC Board
  - a. Develop a long term staff plan
    - i. Minister
    - ii. Religious Education staff
    - iii. Office staff

The program and support goals are very much intertwined, and both sets of goals are essential to fulfillment of the primary goal. Implementation of programs and activities to achieve these goals requires strong stewardship and commitment from both the congregation and the leadership: Board, committees and staff.

Critical to the success of the congregation is matching the financial resources of PCUUC to these goals. Developing the plans to meet these goals will only be possible if PCUUC's financial resources grow to meet the cost of any new programs. With the growth and improved services that will arise from these goals, PCUUC will continue to attract new members and to stimulate generous financial commitments from the members and friends in the form of increased pledges.

## **Implementation :**

Active or continuing members as of December, 2004 averaged 27 members at the end of our first year of worship at Sunday morning services. In December, 2007 it grew to 57. We are at 65 continuing members by the end of the 2006-07 church year. Our goal continues to be to have 150 active or continuing members by the end of this long range plan, June 2013.

The operating budget for 2007-08 consists of expenses of \$72,113. The 2007-08 congregational budget projects \$65,000 of pledge income. We are constantly receiving volunteer donations from many members to allow us to run favorably on expenses so we are current working with a balanced budget. This budget includes expenses for the church administrator and Director of Religious Education positions, liability and workers compensation insurance, and amounts for honoraria for speakers and visiting ministers. Our rent expenses for the Barn and school are minimal at this time.

A search for a part time minister will be recommended to the congregation for the 2008 - 2009 church year. The recruitment, if accepted by the congregation in a special February 2008 meeting, should begin in the spring of 2008 and it is hoped it will be completed by the summer of 2008. The Board believes that this position is critical to the viability of the church. The plan would be to have a full time minister by fall of 2010 and a building by 2013. The decision of whether to call a full time minister by 2010 must be guided by finances. Until that time the laity, visiting ministers, ministers in training and other speakers should be used to provide the services a minister would be assigned. The establishment of the separate growth fund is another important first step in planning for our future financial needs. A multi-year capital campaign for expansion will be needed sometime in the future.

At the retreat, it was decided to complete the project for hiring a minister for the congregation and then follow up with a building. We need to plan for the eventual renting and/or building of a new worship and religious education facility. As described above, if we continue to grow at the same rate we are growing today, and given the capacity limitations of the Barn, we will outgrow the Barn for Sunday services in the next 2 to 3 years. This is based on the theory that when a congregation exceeds 75-80% of its worship space capacity, it discourages people from attending.

To accomplish the finance and administrative goals, the Board established a Finance Committee in (2007-08). The Finance Committee is responsible to advise the Board on matters related to sound financial stewardship, including projected funding requirements to call a minister and eventually to procure a building as described elsewhere in this plan. The Finance Committee is also responsible to research potential funding sources, such as grants and bequests, to augment member pledges and contributions to meet the church's financial needs. Contingent on membership approval, it is anticipated that a capital fund drive for building procurement will be undertaken in 2010-2012.

Reflecting our commitment to congregational polity, effective leadership drawn from within the congregation is critical to achieving the goals of this Long Range Plan. None of these goals can be accomplished without the continued involvement of our members and friends, both as members of committees and individual volunteers. There must be a continuing commitment to provide support and training for our leaders utilizing internal, local, District and denominational (i.e., UUA) resources.

As stated above, none of these goals or plans can be accomplished without the continued involvement of our members and friends. With that participation comes the responsibility for financial contributions to match the vision this plan describes. Help us make our vision a reality!