

CHURCH GOALS FOR 2023

Annual goals are meant to be a catalyst to move the congregation forward. The goals do not need to cover everything that the church should do in a year – all of those things still need to be recognized as important. However, the goals seek out next steps in the congregational journey. They may arise from internal needs for individual and community growth toward living its values. They may arise from denominational initiatives and/or reflect societal needs that acknowledge our interconnectedness and our responsibility to promote justice widely. New visions emerge and change over time. They need regular discernment by the congregation and its leaders.

The Annual Goals are used by the Staff Leadership Team and Staff to strategically plan actions for the year (per policy) collaborating with the congregation's teams and volunteers to strengthen the efforts and achieve results. The SLT reports monthly to the board about how these actions are going, clarifying the Board's intent if needed and discussing changes and adjustments. An annual report at the end of the year clearly shows what accomplishments were made toward the goal. Then the next year, new goals are developed. They may reflect next steps, be about a new topic, or a continuation of the previous year's work.

2023 Church Goals:

1. Establish or deepen a relationship with at least one local organization serving the LGBTQ+ communities.

Explanation: This goal is in the spirit of "Welcoming Congregations" a UUA program that intends to encourage continuous engagement and improvement in welcoming practices for the LGBTQ+ community. Being more welcoming, or having radical hospitality, has long been an aspirational value at East Shore. To be successful involves doing internal work in the congregation about these identities and preferences such as the Transforming Hearts Program led by Alex Kapitan. It also involves reaching out beyond East Shore to build relationships and partner with relevant organizations by following their direction and providing the support they ask for.

LGBTQ+ is an acronym that collectively refers to individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer, sometimes stated as LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) or, historically, GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender). The addition of the Q for queer is a more recently preferred version of the acronym as cultural opinions of the term queer focus increasingly on its positive, reclaimed definition (see *Queer*). The Q can also stand for questioning, referring to those who are still exploring their own sexuality and/or gender. The "+" represents those who are part of the community but for whom LGBTQ does not accurately capture or reflect their identity.

Rationale: It has been almost twenty years since East Shore did intentional all-congregation work on LGBTQ+ justice and was certified as a Welcoming Congregation. While progress has been made since then, these rights have of late had increased political and cultural threats. Last year initial efforts were made to reaffirm our values and take greater action. Now is the time to update ourselves, recommit, and act in solidarity for LGBTQ+ justice.

Example Strategies:

- ❖ A ministry team inclusive of LGBTQ+ members could be formed to steer these efforts. The team could be brand new or an existing team could redefine themselves to fill this role.

- ❖ All ministry teams could find ways to be a part of this work by participating with internal efforts, ensuring their own teams' welcoming approaches, collaborating with other ministry teams, and partnering with local community groups where LGBTQ+ and their ministry team's purposes intersect.

This work could also result in East Shore's recertification as a welcoming congregation, one measure of success in meeting the goal in 2023.

2. Intentionally apply a multicultural, anti-racist approach and lens in all ministry team activities, program development, and other aspects of congregational life. All are invited and encouraged to participate. This first year of the goal, there will be special focus on welcoming, membership, worship, and RE.

Explanation: Multiculturalism means nurturing a religious community where people of all races, ethnicities, and cultures see their cultural identities reflected and affirmed in every aspect of congregational life—worship, fellowship, leadership, governance, religious education, social justice, etc. Multiculturalism means that we create religious homes where encounters between people of different cultural identities intersect with Unitarian Universalism to create a fully inclusive community where, in the words of a vision statement adopted by the Unitarian Universalist Association's (UUA) Leadership Council, "all people are welcomed as blessings and the human family lives whole and reconciled." More at: [Multiculturalism](#) .

Racism means individual, cultural, institutional, and systemic ways by which differential consequences are created for different racial groups. The group historically or currently defined as white is being advantaged, and groups historically or currently defined as non-white (African, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, etc.) are being disadvantaged. More at: [Racism](#) .

Anti-racism means individual and/or group commitment to develop the personal strength, critical-thinking ability, and activist skills to both dismantle dysfunctional and oppressive institutions and to work with others to build caring, just, diverse communities and societies for all. More at: [Anti-racism](#) .

Rationale: The UUA has initiated and is fully supporting a many decades long awaited movement to make progress building the Beloved Community which is wholesome, loving, and fair. In the past East Shore has responded to some of the calls for racial justice with significant participation in the Beloved Conversations Programs, White Supremacy Workshops, Racial Justice Ministry Team educational activities, a multi-year Black Lives Matter Flash Stance and most recently giving 97% approval to the 8th Principle. Through these experiences, we have learned that the struggle is complex and being part of our dominant culture is a barrier to our progress. To overcome this barrier, we need to develop greater awareness and understanding of how we and our church are inadvertently complicit with unjust systems. Then we will be better able to dismantle them and artfully create a more loving and just culture. This is a long-term struggle which is denominational, societal, and at the crux of our humanity; it will take perseverance and humility.

Example Strategies:

- ❖ Develop multi-cultural approaches and apply anti-racist lenses in the creation of:
 - Worship,
 - Adult learning (example book—Aging to Saging),
 - Youth/intergenerational interactions and sense of belonging,
 - Social justice ministries such as Congregations for the Homeless,
 - Bridges from visitor to member;
- ❖ Audit program materials with a multi-cultural, anti-racist lens.
- ❖ Examine/improve the training materials and increase the opportunities for usher volunteers to immerse in the practice of multicultural welcoming.

- ❖ Examine/improve the training materials and increase the opportunities for pastoral volunteers to immerse in the practice of multicultural pastoral care.
- ❖ *Beloved Conversations Among* Committee, *8th Principle* Ministry Team could lead some efforts;
- ❖ All groups and members at East Shore could participate in offerings, assess their own teams' understanding and actions, collaborate with other teams, and build a foundation for local community advocacy, outreach, and partnership;
- ❖ Board leadership could gain awareness and skills and make a commitment to apply a multicultural and anti-racist approach and lens to their activities and decisions.
- ❖ A volunteer or participation coordination program to enhance multicultural membership engagement and help measure and track it.

3. Intentionally create pathways that support current and future leaders to develop leadership skills in all aspects/areas of the church.

Explanation: All organizations need to provide professional development on leadership skills unique to that organization. Those currently leading need opportunities to learn how best to take effective action and collaborate in ways that will help the church achieve its goals and mission. Timely and orderly leadership rotation allows new and different members to contribute their talents to the church. To that end, a variety of leadership training and mentoring opportunities should be provided to upcoming leaders on a regular basis. Specific structures should be set up so that all of these learning opportunities take place on a continuous basis from year to year.

Rationale: An aging membership, seven years between called ministers, congregational conflict, membership decrease, changing culture of family and time commitments, staff turnover, the pandemic and the sudden downsizing of the board have disrupted the sound passage of leadership at East Shore. Current and aspiring leaders should have ample opportunity to learn how to:

- ❖ Lead with UU principles and values;
- ❖ Communicate effectively
- ❖ Use governance or organizational rudiments;
- ❖ Run an effective meeting;
- ❖ Collaborate with other leaders, groups and members;
- ❖ Use needed technology
- ❖ Bring in, orient and mentor new people to groups;
- ❖ Use UUA resources proactively for support.

Example Strategies:

- ❖ Board skill development workshops; book discussion such as *Salsa, Soul, and Spirit*';
- ❖ SLT skill development, team building, shared leadership model study/practice;
- ❖ Board Committee skill development opportunities including mentoring;
- ❖ Ministry Team leader skill development opportunities including mentoring;
- ❖ Nominating Committee and Policy and Governance Committee providing learning materials and workshops for current leaders and basic training for those interested in or being nominated for Board positions.
- ❖ Worship leadership training;
- ❖ Financial leadership skills - define, plan for and achieve financial sustainability including:
 - Budget,
 - Endowment,
 - Staff Security,
 - Holly House.