Board of Trustees – Priorities for 2024-25 Focus

Each summer, the UUCC Board of Trustees meets in retreat. A major goal of the retreat is to set priorities for the upcoming congregational year at UUCC. This year, meeting in August 2024, the Board concluded that our two priorities will be the distinct, yet interlocking issues of **Community-building** and **Stewardship**.

By **Community-Building**, we refer to our ability and willingness, individually and collectively, to form and maintain healthy, direct, authentic and caring relationships among fellow congregants and beyond, in our community and society. We are social organisms whose divine spark lies in our connections with one another. We aim to honor and value our differences as well as our similarities as we build toward authentically Beloved Community, using kindness when possible and realizing that sometimes it is important to experience discomfort as we follow this never-ending growth path. We aim to create both healthy *self-differentiation* and a *collectivist* focus in which *triangulation* and other indirect communication is replaced by direct, honest interaction in a supportive circle of care.[1]

And by **Stewardship**, we mean it writ large. We mean building a culture of joyful, energetic and eager care for our congregation and our world which is widespread across the congregation. This includes but is not limited to ensuring that we have the financial, volunteer, and professional resources to truly live into our mission of embodying love in action. And we strive to champion the vision of the Stewardship Council, to foster "a culture of generosity that enables UUCC to thrive and achieve its mission," and "to encourage and facilitate joyful giving and the sharing of our faith, presence, and resources."

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[1] Words used in this sentence (from the fields of psychology and sociology):

***Self-differentiation*:** Self-differentiated people are clear within themselves on who they are, what they are feeling, and what they value. This clarity makes it possible to maintain healthy relationship boundaries, rather than blending into the other person, like a chameleon, or pressuring others to conform. People who lack self-differentiation often experience disabling anxiety during a relationship. See https://www.thebowencenter.org/differentiation-of-self.

***Collectivist; Collectivism*:** These terms mean the opposite of "individualist" and "individualism." Collectivism is a cultural norm that highly values the pursuit of welfare for one's family or community, whereas "individualism" values the individual's pursuit of their own welfare in isolation. The American Psychological Association's dictionary of psychology defines "collectivism" as the tendency to view oneself as a member of a larger group, rather than as isolated and independent. Collectivism and Individualism form two extremes, with most societies falling somewhere in between. But research suggests that Western societies, including the USA, follow individualistic norms, compared with other societies.

***Triangulation*:** In triangulation, a person has a difficult or challenging issue with someone, but does not want, or does not feel able, to bring it up directly. Instead, the person talks about it with a third person. Triangulation often takes the form of complaining and gossip. Triangulation can spin out destructive conflicts, and bury the possibility of real progress.