

Vision

A loving congregation that connects.

Mission

We care for ourselves, each other, and our neighbors and risk acting for justice. Our connections create self-acceptance, empathy, and empowerment in this inclusive and diverse community.

Ends

- **Each person in the congregation is spiritually alive. We are inspired and equipped to extend radical love through our daily lives and authentic conversations.**

“Each person in the congregation” means all persons, of every age, who are active in the congregation through worship, religious education, and/or small group ministries. They may or may not be members. We will expect that people who are more active, and with a longer tenure, will usually but not always indicate more spiritual aliveness and extension of radical love than those who are less active and newer.

“spiritually alive” means that a person considers spiritual and theological questions with intention, experiences and seeks feelings of wonder, connection and empathy, and acts on these thoughts and feelings through personal and social ethical living.

We measure spiritual aliveness through self-reports. A simple survey may suffice.

“inspired and equipped to extend radical love through our daily lives and authentic conversations” means that people hear, and are provoked and encouraged by, stories, examples, suggestions and guides about how to align their personal and family habits and practices with the call of love, and about how one-to-one and small group engagement and conversations can deepen relationships, change their own and other lives, and connect people to truth and community. By “radical love” we mean the love preached by Jesus of Nazareth and other prophets, which calls us to expand our care and solidarity to wider and wider circles, and to challenges existing systems of power.

- We measure “daily lives” through self-reports of alignment and activity. Are our suggestions and examples and inspiration effective in helping form habits and practices that align with our values? Do children, adults, and families try those practices and stick with them?
- We measure “authentic conversations” through percentage engagement in “authentic conversation opportunities” in and out of the congregation (small groups, human library, social justice listening campaign, pastoral care, and so forth). Do people report awareness, participation, and ongoing engagement?

Strategy 1A: Our leaders and staff lead, create, and offer spiritually alive worship and programs.

— The Minister, Music Director, Intern, DRE, and key volunteers create and lead sensory-rich, meaningful and memorable worship; these worship experiences make people feel connected, alive, and inspired to live lives of purpose and love all week long. We use the best practices from Worship Design Studio, and other resources, to produce quality and engaging experiences.

— The DRE and key volunteers create and lead Religious Education programs that engage people and families in self-discovery, community building, and religious growth. These programs engage the sense of wonder, creativity, compassion, and integrity that makes life good and beautiful.

— Key volunteers, with support from the DRE, lead family ministry programs that connect whole families with each other and others. These programs build community, engage in service, and explore our world together.

— Key volunteers, with staff support as needed, offer expanded opportunities to sing, make and experience art, and engage in a variety of spiritual practices. These “spiritual arts” engage people’s bodies, creativity, and soul in both one-time and ongoing practices.

— Key volunteers, with support from the Minister and Intern Minister(s), ground social justice in spiritual depth. Social justice efforts come from theological reflection on the world, our hungers and hurts. Those efforts feed back into further reflection and alignment with personal and social life.

Tactic	Authority	Timeline	Resource
SR + M + M Worship	Minister and Music Dir and Intern(s)	ongoing	Minister time 17K/annual for intern
RE program engage	DRE + team	ongoing 2018-2019 more volunteers with leadership 2020-2021 youth programming	DRE time Volunteers to step up
Family Ministry	Team with DRE support	ongoing 2018-2019 volunteers lead	2K annual Volunteers to step up
Embodied art and spirit	Team with staff support	ongoing 2018-2019 encourage projects 2019-2020 create team 2020+ clear offerings	include with intern time
Social Justice that's spiritually alive	SJ team	ongoing	minister and intern time

Strategy 1B: We connect more people to worship and programs.

— The minister, working with key volunteers, arranges to stream worship for both live and later viewing. Homebound, traveling, and not-ready-to-visit persons can engage more fully in worship.

— The DCL creates a monthly postal mailing with the theme packet and a monthly calendar of events and programs, so that more people are aware and engaged with these materials.

— Key volunteers, and the DCL and membership coordinator, support a wide variety of small groups and activities. We improve our sign up and communication efforts, and continuously assess, create, and cease groups to focus on what is working to connect people. This can include ongoing groups for interest, affinity, or theme, one-time programs, and social events (for example, a return of the once-successful UniSupper program).

— The DCL, DRE and minister encourage and facilitate attendance at conferences, summer camps, and other wider UU events where people can connect with our faith at depth.

— Key volunteers, the membership coordinator, and other staff, use technology effectively, including social media, texting, and the website, to extend our message to our people and the public.

— We offer strong support family ministry events, including families and people with and without young children. (See above.)

— Key volunteers, with staff support, offer in-person and electronic programs to reach people at a distance from the church.

Tactic	Authority	Timeline	Resource
Stream Worship	Minister + volunteer	Spring 2018	Equipment Copyright permissions
Mailing content	DCL	Fall 2018	Paper and postage \$500 annual
Small Groups	DCL + Membership Coord.	ongoing 2018-2019 improve signup 2019 + create more groups, cull list	Time for DCL hours for Membership Cord.
Camps and conferences	Minister + DRE + Membership Coordinator	2018-2019 identify opportunities, publish 2019-2020 create scholarship fund, send people	3-5K for scholarships, beginning 2019
Tech/Web/Social	volunteer + mem cord?	2018- recruit volunteer, define scope	500/year for tech
Family ministry —above			
Distance reach	Minister + DCL + team	2019-2020 - identify remote leaders 2020+ begin programs	1000/year supplies and outreach, beginning 2020

Strategy 1C: Inspire and equip leaders and members to connect and converse with each other.

- The minister, intern minister(s), and the DCL collaborate to offer regular trainings to the Caring Team to inspire and equip them to do pastoral care work in the congregation.
- The minister and DCL hold a Group Leader Summit and training twice yearly, to equip leaders, share knowledge, and created common programs.
- The social justice team, with staff support, supports the social justice listening campaign. “Listeners” spend time with 2 people per month (1 new to the church) and create a useable inventory of passions and gifts.

Tactic	Authority	Timeline	Resouces
Caring Team Trainings	Minister, Intern, DCL, team	Trainings in spring of 2019, 2021, and 2023	Intern stipend - above. Honorarium/ travel - 500 per
Group Leader Summit	Minister, DCL	Beginning fall 2019, 2x year	time for minister
Listening campagn	Team with support from minister/intern	ongoing. 2 “listens” / month / team member summer 2018 - create inventory database	volunteer time

To accomplish all these tactics, we need the following resources:

We need to have an intern each year, or part-time assistant minister.

We need to expand membership coordinator to 17hrs/week.

We need to allow DCL to focus on pastoral admin and small groups, by shifting other responsibilities to the membership coordinator and using automated systems when possible.

We need to purchase the tech for live stream and have volunteers who can run it.

We need to allow minister and music director to focus on life-changing worship, but removing other tasks and distractions.

We need scholarship money for people to attend conferences and camps.

We need to allow the DRE time for family ministry and RE programming by having strong volunteers and using automated systems.

- **Our woven community celebrates differences, inspiring generosity of talent, time, and treasure, sustaining the congregation.**

“our woven community” means the interlocking circles of members, friends, children, family members, and community partners.

“celebrates differences” means that we provide quality ministry to people who identify as people of color and/or indigenous, working class, disabled, and/or LGBTQ, and that we include people, perspectives, and connections with these identities in leadership of worship, education, justice, caring, and governance. This inclusion is accountable, genuine, and avoids tokenization.

- We measure through a survey of members and friends in the church as a whole.
- We can also evaluate how many people from diverse identities are in leadership positions.
- We also measure through the content of worship, curriculum, and justice partnerships — verifying that perspectives from these identities are included in each worship service and other content we produce.

“inspiring generosity of talent, time and treasure, sustaining the congregation” means that members, friends, and partners give more of their gifts — their skills, their time, and their wealth — to the church. This generosity keeps the congregation thriving.

- We measure through the number of volunteers and an increase in median giving.
- The “sustained congregation” is measured through non-deficit budgets which are uniformly “fair compensation” and “fair share.” We can measure the gap between our actual budget and what it would take to be fair compensation and fair share.

Strategy 2A: Celebrate Differences

— The minister, the music director, the DRE, and the DCL, with key volunteers, ensure that all content is diverse in image, creator, and story.

— The minister and the Justice for All Team invest in POCI and LGBTQ members and friends, through providing pastoral care, leadership development, social and support groups, and other resources as requested.

— The social justice council and staff offer support for the Justice for All Team so they can be effective in their work.

— The Board and JFA team uses the Beloved Conversations program to engage each other, learn, and move toward depth.

— The minister and JFA team educates our folks about how to be good allies and accomplices. We regularly offer cultural competency training, “vocabulary lessons,” and so on.

— We all build connections between people within and beyond the congregation, through programs like human library, listening campaign, interfaith choir festivals or other partnerships, and so forth.

Tactic	Authority	Timeline	Resource
Diverse content	Minister, DCL, Music Director w/ justice for all team	ongoing spring 2019 - create sub-team for accountability	Minister, Music time
Invest in POCI/LGBTQ	Minister and JFA team	fall 2018 - ID team leaders, wants fall 2019+ fund it	2-4K annual for conferences, etc.
Support Justice for All Team	SJ Council, JFA Team, minister, intern	ongoing. ID needs, make happen	above
Beloved Confersations	Board, Justice for All Team	Spring 2020	\$2200
Educate our folks	Minister and JFA team	ongoing	time
Build connections	JFA and SJ team	ongoing	time

Strategy 2B: Inspire Generosity.

- The DRE and Membership coordinator hold regular volunteer open houses to recruit volunteers for their vital programs.
- The minister, with intern minister(s), offers the Harvest the Power leadership program every three years.
- The finance team, with staff support, ensures that there are strong stewardship efforts each year.
- The finance team, with staff support, promotes alternative giving ideas, including legacy giving and gifts discernment. We make sure to follow through on existing ideas.

Tactic	Authority	Timeline	Resource
Volunteer Open House	Membership Coord, DRE, teams	beginning fall 2018	staff time
leadership development	Minister	Harvest the Power in Fall 2019 and Spring 2022	minister time
Stewardship	Finance Team	ongoing	staff time volunteers
Alt. giving	Finance Team + DCL	ongoing. annual legacy giving event - oct each year.	DCL time to organize

Strategy 2C: Sustaining the congregation

— The Board aligns our governance with best practice, by using an appropriate version of policy governance to clarify roles and responsibilities, improve transparency, and release leaders (staff and lay) to do their best work. We also make an annual review of this plan, including the measurement of effectiveness. That annual review will include revision of tactics as necessary depending on circumstances, volunteer commitment, and so forth.

— The Building and Grounds team, with Finance and Board support, works to reduce, if not eliminate, deferred maintenance on our building.

— The Board, with the minister, ensure we have the right staff size and structure for our growing ministry. We continuously improve and communicate staff functions. We are fair compensation to all staff.

— The Board, Minister, DRE, and Office Assistant leverage our building for income through rentals and fee-based offerings. We have and execute a plan, whether Spectrum School continues or departs.

Tactic	Authority	Timeline	Resource
Governance	Board	2018-2019 - policy review, board retreat, clarify responsibilities Fall 2020 - Policy Governance Shift	3.5K consulting/year 2020-2022
Deferred Maint. reduction	B and G team, DCL, Board	Spring, annual: review list Summer/fall, annual: tackle projects	existing cap. maint. reserve fund. funds to employ qualified maint. person.
Staff for size	Board, Minister	spring 2018 - comp. plan beginning fall 2018 - fair comp. increase mem. coord hours. annual - review, align needs have intern — if funds, consider 1/2 time assistant minister.	10K+ added annually to keep pace with fair comp standards and needs.
Leverage for income	Board, Minister, Office Assist	2018-2019 begin 2/3yo preschool keep or create major renter	hope to net 20-30K per year

To accomplish all these tactics, we need the following resources:

We need the fee for for beloved conversations (currently \$2200 for our size congregation).

We need money for leadership development opportunities for POCI and GLBTQ leaders.

We need funds to eliminate deferred maintenance.

We need funds for fair compensation, and growing staff needs.

We need funds for policy governance consulting.

We need funds to employ a qualified maintenance person, especially if our B&G chair steps back from day-to-day repairs.

- **Our networks of connections and focused acts for justice foster a world of understanding, equity, repair, and solidarity.**

“networks of connections” means our personal and institutional associations and connections — organizations, neighborhood groups, collections of friends, co-workers, and more.

“focused acts of justice” means our intentional, supported efforts to serve needs, educate ourselves and others, witness to our values in the world, and organize with others for a more just world — organizing that is effective, with a concrete goal, strategy, and in relationship with others. It means that our justice is not passive but active.

“foster a world of understanding, equity, repair and solidarity” means a world with less hatred, inequality, despair, and disconnection. It means a world where people connect across differences to both serve the present needs and build structures which are more just and liberating. In small and large ways, our personal, collective, and cooperative efforts make a difference in the world.

- We measure our effectiveness in helping to foster this world by assessing the number and strength of the interventions, projects, and partnerships engaged in. Are our connections strong? Do our task forces, partnerships, and the work of the senior minister have diverse ways to engage, a plan to make change, and are making progress on that plan?

Strategy 3A: Create and sustain strong networks within and without the congregation.

— The SJ council and others create connections with our local neighborhood and in the greater Rockford region. We prioritize participation in projects that build a sense of place and relationship — such as community gardens, little free library, and so forth.

— The SJ council and the minister nurture key partnerships with interfaith and secular groups, including state, national and international UU groups (including UUPCC). We assess what partnerships are working, what they need, and how we can be good partners.

— We invest in listening campaign, training more folks to do relationship work and creating an inventory of the connections and hopes of members and others. (also in 1C above).

Tactic	Authority	Timeline	Resource
Connections	SJ Council and teams	annual review and plan	In STP for \$

Key Partnerships	SJ Council and Minister	fall 2018 — assess each partnership: who, what, etc?	In STP for \$
Listening campaign - above			

Strategy 3B: Effective focused acts for justice.

- The SJ Council, with minister support, strengthens, creates, and sustains justice teams by investing money, training time, and more, so those teams are effective in their work.
- The Board and SJ council empowers the minister and staffs the church so the minister can co-lead a community wide effort to improve early childhood services, referrals, and outcomes, as well as participate in efforts to promote racial justice and dismantle white supremacy.
- The SJ council, with staff support, clearly communicates opportunities to engage in this work to the congregation, and celebrates successes, and witnesses to our values in the world

Tactic	Authority	Timeline	Resource
Justice Teams	SJ Council and Minister	assess and strengthen annual	Minister time, existing budget for training/ support/outreach
Minister project	Minister	ongoing	existing + Alignment Rockford Staff
Communication	SJ Team, DCL, Office Assist	ongoing	above

To accomplish all these tactics, we need the following resources:

- We need to ensure that Share the Plate funds are allocated for key partnerships.
- We need trained and supported volunteers who lead teams and projects.
- We need sufficient staff in other areas so the minister is able to do his work in this area.